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FICTIONS OF CAPTIVITY: RACIALIZING RELIGION IN EARLY U.S. LITERATURE AND CULTURE

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FICTIONS OF CAPTIVITY: RACIALIZING RELIGION IN EARLY U.S.
LITERATURE AND CULTURE

BY
SERAP HIDIR

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on rarely explored but widely prevalent representations of non-Christian religions in fictional captivity narratives, specifically those that paint America as a new and independent nation. It argues that religious depictions in early American literature are extensions of racial meaning-making that become embedded in U.S. national identity. The representations of the heathen, in relation to Muslims and converted Jews in North Africa on an international scale, and domestically with the indigenous Pequots, consolidates American unity as Christian at its base. Particularly, the discussions of how and which populations are easily assimilated reveals an intricate triangulation of religious affiliation, race, and nationhood and discloses religion to be a socially and politically problematic production.

The primary close readings, namely Susanna Rowson's *Slaves in Algiers*, Royall Tyler's *The Algerine Captive*, and Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*, offer an interpretation where religious affiliations are used respectively to define and reinforce national belonging that is religiously exclusive. Therefore, racialization of religion occurs through the confirmation of whiteness and Christianity as intricately tied. This identification surfaces in a discourse that is preoccupied with liberty and national unity during captivity and authenticates itself from a perspective of religious and cultural differences.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION Fictions of Captivity: Racializing Religion in	
Early U.S. Literature and Culture	1
Captivity and the Cyclical Nature of Racialization.....	8
An Overview of the Chapters.....	13
CHAPTER 1 The Rhetoric of the Reverse Captivity Perspective in	
<i>Slaves in Algiers</i>	16
Intersections of National Identity: Theater, Immigration, and	
Christian Benevolence.....	20
Denial of Slavery: “Call us not Slaves”	25
Infidels: Markers of Generous, Forgiving Liberators	31
Unassimilable Women: Impediments to Immigration	37
CHAPTER 2 Resistance to Conversion: “By Uniting We Stand, By Dividing We	
Fall”	45
Prophecy, Dreams, and the Learned Reader	49
Slavery: “good black soul into a white body”	53
“My body is in slavery, but my spirit is free.”	57
CHAPTER 3 Conflict Resolved: “The white man cometh—the Indian vanisheth” ..	61
Mechanical Existence/Automaton	66

Disguise.....	72
“Might Have Forgotten That Nature Had Put Barriers Between Us”	78
CONCLUSION	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

INTRODUCTION

FICTIONS OF CAPTIVITY: RACIALIZING RELIGION IN EARLY U.S. LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Race is a social and ideological construction. I use the word racialization, as Patrick Wolfe puts it, as an “exercise of power in its own right,” and as “a concept and the activation of that concept in the production of racial subjects” (58). Thus, to understand how “racial subjects” are created and defined is to understand the contextualized power relationships of that creation. This dissertation explores how literary depictions of race and religion, particularly religious differences in captivity narratives, cultivate racialized religion during a foundational moment in the late eighteenth century: the birth of the United States as a nation. As I discuss in this introduction and demonstrate in the following chapters with close readings of three primary texts, the term racialized religion refers to conflated perceptions of ethnicity, race, and religion. Excavating literary representations of religion in relation to depictions of race in a U.S. settler-colonial and the imperial framework demonstrates a link between representations of Muslims, Jewish converts, and indigenous people.¹ While analyzing portrayals of these racial and religious groups may seem unrelated, especially given that indigeneity is not considered a religious category, this correspondence in seeming differences itself is what facilitates the similitude in their

¹ I use the word indigenous or its deviations. The specificity in the usage of various references is context related and marked by quotation by quotation marks.

representations. I examine literary adaptations of captivity narrative as a case study, tracing common patterns in religious rhetoric and illuminating its influence on racialization.

The literature of captivity disseminates popular American religious sentiments, thereby contributing to the discourse of racialization that was borrowed from anti-Semitic and Islamophobic tropes and the discourse of civilizing indigenous people. I argue that racialization, through its influence on developing religious national identity, brings white Christianity to the center of literary imaginings; the role of racialization in confirming American identity is particularly evident in the trope of captivity. Ultimately, the authors of the fictional accounts I examine, while depicting the captivity of Americans, assure the readers that the captives are immune to religious conversion and that their resistance to religious assimilation preserves American values. By considering the role of literature in nation-building through the discourse of contemporary social and political realities and exploring the trope of the “enslaved” and “heathenish” religious and ethnic affiliations, I illustrate the extent to which literary depictions carry stereotypical and essentialist associations.

Political and cultural changes in late eighteenth-century Revolutionary America compel racial formations, which are an important aspect of American national identity. This is especially relevant to Wolfe’s reference to two main assertions of race that emerged in the eighteenth century; namely, that “hierarchical differences are not neutral” and that physical characteristics are tied to “cognitive, cultural, and moral ones” in a non-negotiable manner (52). Although racial taxonomy of the eighteenth century, guided by Enlightenment scientific inclinations, has

emphasized physical characteristics as primary determinants of race, physical and non-physical markers inescapably inform racial identification which is hierarchical in its existence. There is an inevitable interdependence between physical and non-physical characteristics.² I take this categorization to be mutually informative. Indeed, the concept of “race” as a systematically definitive category was formed in the late eighteenth century in the United States. The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century’s dominant rhetoric of religious differences shifted to racial profiling that was subsequently determined by the racial taxonomy of color lines in the late eighteenth century.³ Yet, the discourses of religious difference are not easily dissociative, and they inform the perceptions of racial formations.⁴ Therefore, religious identifications play a significant role in informing the fluid positions of racial interpretations.

Roxann Wheeler definitively argues that in the eighteenth-century British context, physical differences such as skin color, nose shape, or hair texture were not as important as “concepts of Christianity, civility, and rank” observed in recognizable traits such as language, dress, and manners (7). Thus, cultural, religious, and socio-economic status must be considered when engaging the eighteenth-century ideas of racial difference. Wheeler further demonstrates that race is “best understood as a hybrid political, economic, religious, and social construction,” alluding to the relational nature of race and religion (289):

² Namely, any resonance of “cognitive, cultural, and moral,” as Wolfe describes it.

³ Critical interpretations of the historically evolving nature of certain identities in relation to difference and whiteness have been the focus of scholarly attention. Specifically, Karen Brodtkin’s *How Jews Became White Folks*, Matthew Frye Jacobson’s *Whiteness of a Different Color*, and Roxann Wheeler’s *The Complexion of Race*.

⁴ See Joanne Pope Melish’s introduction of *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and “Race” in New England, 1780-1860*. She specifically references gradual but systematic emancipation in North America. Also Partick Wolfe’s article “Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structure of Race”

If not adjusted to precise historical conditions and ideology, racial constructions seem monolithic and unchanging. Our contemporary sense of race is heavily filtered through recent assumptions that obfuscate an earlier moment in which biological racism, the white man's moral mission to convert and civilize "heathens," and Europeans' racial destiny as rulers of the world were not inevitable. (299)

As the words "religious" and "racial" are distinctly embedded as separate in our modern understanding of the concept that racial constructions are easily overlooked. Matthew Frye Jacobson reminds us that "race is not just a conception; it is also a perception. Race resides not in nature but in politics and culture" (9). Per Jacobson's point, understanding race allows one to consider political motivations and cultural negotiations in context.

This dissertation considers racial formations to be dynamic and, at times, inconsistent because perceptions of race are complex. Cultural imagination reveals racial understandings to be relational and contextual. Literature, in particular, reiterates and contributes to racial negotiation in the realm of fiction. As I demonstrate in the following chapters, the literary resonance of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic tropes are part of the rhetoric of racialization. Although attributes like being submissive, passive, greedy, gullible, naive, spiritual, brutal, and savage repeat as stereotypical traits, they lie within a narrative of hierarchical existence that rests its grounds on differentiating American whiteness and Christianity from its religious counterparts. It is the slavish nature of religiously, ethnically, and racially blurred categorizations within captivity narratives that allow for a comparative national

identity of free Americans, whose preoccupation with the ideals of liberty solidifies their whiteness and Christianity.

In post-Revolutionary America, the absence of faith-based citizenship renders the heavily religious rhetoric of literature worthy of further examination. In other words, while founding documents declare the U.S. as a secular state, the popular religious sentiment embedded in these texts defies the official recognition. Analyzing key passages that are crucial to national belonging reveals fictions of captivity to be rife with references to fanaticized and racialized religion, which contrasts official documents and treaties that emphasize secular inclinations. This contrast is explicit in regard to the conflict surrounding the Barbary Captivity, as in the example of an Arabic translation of the treaty between the United States and of Tripoli of Barbary, signed by Joel Barlow on January 4, 1797:

Article 11th: As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion, as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen- and as the said states have never entered into any war of act of hostility against any Mahomedan nation, it is declared by the parties, that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.⁵

While article 11 of the treaty stresses U.S. impartiality, the popular religious sentiment of fictions of captivity contradicts the secular tone of the agreement. For instance, written three years earlier, Susanna Rowson's melodrama *Slaves in Algiers or, A*

⁵ See Stevens, James Wilson. *An Historical and Geographical Account of Algiers; Comprehending A Novel and Interesting Detail of Events Relative to American Captives.*

Struggle for Freedom, the primary text I close read in my first chapter, portrays the U.S. as a Christian country. Citizenship did not require religious affiliation in Early America, yet captivity narratives suggest that maintaining one's religion maintains a sense of national belonging.

Patrick Wolfe interprets the emancipation of slavery in the U.S. as a key moment in the racialization of black people. When slavery is outlawed, the division between white and black, free and enslaved, becomes "purely racial" (Wolfe 58).⁶ In other words, the moment slavery was abolished, the term "slavery" was substituted with racial configurations to maintain hierarchical order. In similar ways, religious otherness is an abstract barrier that marks binary divisions. These divisions are dynamically diverse in their social and cultural construction. In the struggle for dominance over morality, Christian values are used to racialize non-Christians. Thus, depictions of "heathenish" practices constitute religious otherness that is assumed to be inherently barbaric, uncivilized, uncultured, primitive, and slavish.

In *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*, Rogers M. Smith argues that American political culture requires a "multiple traditions approach" (18). He claims that American liberal political life is fixed and hierarchical even though, compared to Europe's monarchic traditions, it appears relatively egalitarian. In reference to the civic status of "nonwhite," "nonmale," "non-Christian," and "nonheterosexual" people, Smith associates culture and biology with supremacy, and religion and theology with morals and politics:

⁶ Patrick Wolfe, "Race and racialisation: Some thoughts."

White northern Europeans thought themselves superior, culturally and probably biologically to Africans, Native American Indians, and all other races and civilizations. Although religious appeals were used to support every competing position in American politics, as they have been ever since, many British Americans treated religion as an inherited condition and regarded Protestants (or some subset thereof) as created by God to be morally and politically, as well as theologically, superior to Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and others. (17)

Here, in curious ways, these differentiated categories overlap in their hierarchical existence. Following patterns in their differences and similarities within a relational context helps interpret the valorized positions of religion and race. The historian James T. Kloppenberg states that although Enlightenment values on both sides of the Atlantic, to an extent, were influenced by “the ideals of Christian ethical doctrine,” in the U.S., Protestant Christianity was the foundation on which Enlightenment rationalism depended (41). He posits that in America “the age of Reason was nevertheless also an age of belief” (Kloppenberg 41). Nicholas Guyatt also expresses the inextricable connection between religion and Enlightenment ideals that helped solidify race as a phenomenon. Guyatt argues that in the early U.S., liberal beliefs and actions relied on Enlightenment thinking, manifesting “a Christian benevolence to others,” and despising “the temptations of ‘prejudice,’” which, as a result, rejected the inferiority of “blacks and Indians” (8). Proponents of racial separation, therefore, assumed that only through “civilizing” efforts, non-white people in the U.S. could

exist.⁷ Though Guyatt’s analysis is in the context of “blacks and Indians,” like Kloppenberg’s, it too illuminates the influence of religious doctrines on racialization.

The use of the term racialization helps us tease out nuances in how religious identity is shaped and solidified in the captivity narratives. It is important to rethink the questions about the nature of racial differences, racial implications of religious intolerance, anxieties over conversion, and lastly, their relationship to inclusion and exclusion, assimilation and immigration. To do so, we must dive into eighteenth-century American cultural imagination and its understanding of the religious other concerning settler colonialism and nation-building.⁸ Specifically, the questions circulating this topic include: is religion, therefore, an inevitable part of racialization? If so, how does it impact discussions of race as an ideological and political deployment? To what extent does religion inform our understanding of racial formation? And at the expense of whom? If religious depictions are part of racial construction, is it reasonable to exclude religion from discourse about race politics? In the light of these questions, this dissertation critically analyzes representations of religion in social, political, and racial identity in relation.

Captivity and the Cyclical Nature of Racialization

In the late eighteenth century, U.S. political crises arose from the captivity of white U.S. sailors in Morocco, Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers, and hence literary

⁷ Nicholas Guyatt, *Bind Us Apart: How Enlightened Americans Invented Segregation*, Introduction.

⁸ To define imperialism, I turn to Donald E. Pease’s introduction in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*: In the “New World” “imperialism understood itself primarily as a cultural project involved in naming, classifying, textualizing, appropriating, exterminating, demarcating, and governing of new regime [and] U.S. imperialism is best understood as a complex and interdependent relationship with hegemonic as well as counter hegemonic modalities of coercion and resistance” (22,23).

representations of this crisis mimics adaptations of captivity narrative. Scholars such as Joanne Pope Melish and Paul Baepler agree on the similarities of the Barbary⁹ and Indian captivity narrative. Joanne Pope Melish draws attention to “the strikingly similar imagery” of Arabs, Moors, and Algerines in the genre of Barbary captivity and Native Americans in the genre of white captivity (153). Like Baepler,¹⁰ in an edited essay collection, *The Transatlantic Literary Studies, 1660-1830*, Lise Sorensen argues that Indian captivity narratives set “an interpretive framework for readers of the Barbary captivity narrative, indicating the wider transatlantic context” (177). Making a case for a contextualized reading of these genres, Sorensen addresses the “joint position” of North American Indians and Moors “at the periphery of the civilized” parts of the Atlantic world (177). In *Captivity and Sentiment*, Michelle Burnham describes captivity literature, and therefore its protagonists,¹¹ as endlessly negotiating “zones of contact such as the ‘frontier,’ the Atlantic Ocean, the master/slave division, and the color line” (3). Captivity, then, exposes cultural paradigms in the contact zone. I use the term contact zone in reference to captivity, like Burnham, who borrows the term from Mary Louise Pratt. According to Pratt, the contact zone refers to “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (6). I turn

⁹ Baepler speculates that Barbary “originated from the Greek barbaros or the Latin barbarus to signify non-Greeks or non-Romans, and thus uncivilized populations” (2). Paul Baepler Introduction of *White Slaves, African Masters*.

¹⁰ Baepler includes slave narratives as part of the conversation as well. See his Introduction for his argument on relational approaches of these genres.

¹¹ Burnham is interested in looking at the figure of a captive woman and discusses captivity narrative as an escape literature of transgression. She uses the word “heroines.” I extended the term to include all gender mainly because I find her discussions of national and exceptionalist rhetoric valuable.

to these early encounters in the moments of captivity to study the self-discovery of American national identity.

The parallels between cultural, national, and religious others recall settler tensions between New England colonists and the indigenous nations. Iyko Day discusses how North American settlements “breakaway” from the “normative logic of colonialism,” as they “transfer the power of metropolitan center to periphery,” leading to conquest, permanent settlement, and assimilation of the indigenous populations in settler colonialism (18). Yet, this difference between colonialism and settler colonialism also points out the interdependent relationship.¹² In this sense, North American settlements are fundamentally tied to an imperial metropole, even as its influence diminishes over time. This line of thinking exposes how initial contacts in the era of settler colonialism lead to a body of literature that may have borrowed from and reconstructed the language of European colonialism. It also offers comparative references for sovereignty and dominance. The resonance of religious, racial, and ethnic representations, specifically, Muslims and Jews, projects itself onto the indigenous population of the “New World.”¹³ Additionally, anxieties over so-called “pagan” rituals and practices of indigenous peoples are reminiscent of long-standing European representations of Muslims and Jews. Nabil Matar compares American Indians and Muslims as “a predicate of the other although they originated in half a world away from each other” (103).¹⁴ Likewise, depictions of indigenous encounters

¹² See Iyko Day, in her recent work *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism*.

¹³ Wolfe, “Race and Racialization: Some Thoughts”

¹⁴ For more, see Nabil Matar’s comparison between American Indians and Muslims in his book *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*. Matar also discusses John Foss’ captivity in North African corsairs, the first detailed account published in the U.S. (1798) and argues that Foss used the Indian captivity narrative as a template to appeal to his audience's familiarity of that genre. For Foss,

in the settler setting are reproduced in the Barbary captivity narratives’ conceptualization of Muslims and Jews in post-revolutionary America. Depictions of the other seem cyclical in nature, whereby seemingly different groups are positioned “heathens” and racialized as followers of non-Christian values and practices.

In his foundational work *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said disregards correlations between early American culture and literature and contemporary imperialist traditions. He argues that the United States does not follow the classical imperial model, as it takes the role of a “righter of wrongs around the world”¹⁵ to justify its rather recent global intrusions. Furthermore, in *Orientalism*, Said explains that following World War II, the United States adopted a role on the world stage played previously by colonial powers, namely England and France. Even then, he claims, American inclination and engagement with the Oriental other has been merely a matter of policy. Said states that the “imaginative investment was never made,” and speculates this was “perhaps because the American frontier, the one that counted, was the westward one” (*Orientalism* 290, 291). Since the publication of Said’s two foundational works, much has been argued on the topic of the United States’ imperialism and Orientalism. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease have argued that the United States’ nation- and empire-building are historically linked, contrary to the belief that U.S. imperialism only emerged during the twentieth century. Scholars such as Malini Johar Schueller, Jim Egan, and Timothy Marr have detailed the presence and foundation of the imagined Oriental East and Islam in early American and U.S.

Matar states the “image of the savage Indian would define and legitimate the image of the Muslim” (177).

¹⁵ See Said’s Introduction, *Culture and Imperialism*.

cultures. Malini Johar Schueller shows that writers, scholars, and the public were interested in the Near East, “where the cultures of ancient Christian churches and Islam mingled, and where the distinctions between “enlightened” and “heathen” were extremely unclear” (78).

My research intervenes in Said's explanation of Orientalism as it pertains to the United States, and extends the scholarship of Egan and Marr, by contextualizing portrayals of indigenous people as having global capacity within the context of orientalist discourse, rather than merely discussed in the local context. In response to Said's implications about American westward expansion, I consider moments of captivity as a “frontier.” Schueller already identifies the Orient as “the new frontier” that causes American “anxieties about cross-cultural and interracial contact that reflect a fear of contamination both from people of color and within the country and from imperial contacts abroad” (4, 13). The representation of captors in captivity narratives projects this anxiety and shape the “civilizing” rhetoric of liberty that is used by the American captive. During literal captivity (or slavery),¹⁶ white captives allude to their captors' moral enslavement and retain their national and religious identities that are associated with freedom. The captives resist assimilation despite the hardships of captivity and slavery. Thus, a better understanding of religious identity in captivity narratives shed new light on the rhetoric of national belonging. As I demonstrate in this dissertation, references to Christianity and national origin connect these two concepts together. The comparative rhetoric of democracy, freedom, and liberty of the

¹⁶ The word captivity, especially in the Barbary narratives, is used interchangeably with the slavery or its devitations. I follow the primary texts' usage of these terms to contextualize my own usage of them.

“New World” in relation to captivity of the “Old World” is rooted in literary and cultural representations analyzed in this dissertation.

An Overview of the Chapters

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The intersection of race, religion, and captivity tie my primary readings in a chronological order. Together, the three chapters of my dissertation examine cultural reproductions of religious others that are imagined in the context of race in post-Revolutionary America. Close readings in the following chapters demonstrate that definitive dichotomies of enslavement and freedom, both in domestic and international settings, offer religious and racial discourses that solidify American identity in singularly religious terms against the backdrop of an emerging secular national undertaking.

The first chapter, “The Rhetoric of the Reverse Captivity Perspective in *Slaves in Algiers*,” explores the melodramatic articulation of freedom in Susanna Rowson’s *Slaves in Algiers or, A Struggle for Freedom* (1794). In Rowson’s play, captivity figures as a space to exercise religious integrity and to preserve American national identity in the face of potential degeneracy. Although vivid descriptions of literal enslavement that come to characterize African American slave narratives are absent in Rowson’s play, the title itself conjures ideas of chattel slavery in post-revolutionary America and alludes to bondage in the Islamic nation of Algiers. I argue that Rowson’s play constructs discourses of freedom that assert the supremacy of American captives through captured white Christian Americans’ encounters with cultural and religious others, specifically Muslims and converted Jews of Algiers.

These discursive patterns reiterate the moral superiority of the Christian captive, who is selfless, eager to sacrifice, generous and forgiving, and vilify non-Christian captors and depict Algerian women as helpless. This opposition creates a paradox: the captive possessing a certain freedom during captivity. I called this the “reverse captivity perspective,” whereby moral freedom grants the white Christian American captives authority over their captors. Therefore, I conclude that the play reinforces a national identity that is defined almost exclusively by race and religion.

The second chapter, “Resistance to Conversion: ‘BY UNITING WE STAND, BY DIVIDING WE FALL,’” is an analysis of *The Algerine Captive; or the Life and Adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill, Six Years a Prisoner among the Algerines* (1797) by Royall Tyler. Just like Rowson’s, Tyler’s text is a commentary on contemporary issues and nation-building in the eighteenth-century United States. His work is a two-volume book that narrates the New Englander Updike Underhill’s experiences in the U.S. before and during his six years of captivity in Algiers. Using Tyler’s text, I examine fictional representations of the religious and ethnic others in the genre of the Barbary captivity narrative and find that the text presents conflicting perspectives of North Africa. Tyler portrays different religions and cultures as tolerable, yet at times he does so stereotypically. In the *Algerine Captive*, American slavery solidifies religious and national belonging with uncritically staying true to fundamental national rights.

The third chapter, “Conflict Resolved: ‘The white man cometh—the Indian vanisheth’” explores ways in which divergent religious practices and rituals of indigenous realign the markers of race in Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s historical novel,

Hope Leslie or Early Times in the Massachusetts (1827). In Sedgwick's historical romance, conflicts between new settlers and indigenous Pequots echo across centuries. While purporting to construct religious and racial tolerance, Sedgwick's novel imagines cultural interactions that appropriate indigeneity into Christian values and ideals. This chapter examines recurring motifs of disguise and prevalent references of autonomy in Sedgwick's novel, and how they act to mask the presence of indigenous people. The protagonists' rebellion, motivated by tolerance to and justice for the Pequots, reclaims the democratic roots of liberty. Furthermore, it defies a dogmatic Puritan history through a collective of triumphal, individual judgments based on an autonomous understanding of Christianity. This revisionist narrative of individually-driven men and women of the nineteenth century illuminates racial and religious divisions by acknowledging cultural and religious differences that engender conflict between the Pequots and the settlers.

CHAPTER 1

THE RHETORIC OF THE REVERSE CAPTIVITY PERSPECTIVE IN *SLAVES IN ALGIERS*

Susanna Rowson's melodrama, *Slaves in Algiers or, A Struggle for Freedom*, first published and performed in 1794,¹⁷ is one of many fictional narratives that sentimentalize the new nation's political crisis stemming from Barbary captivity. In Rowson's play, captivity serves as a platform for captives to exercise religious integrity and preserve American national identity in the face of potential degeneracy during encounters with Muslims and converted Jews. It does so by capitalizing on the virtue and freedom of the "slaves," essentially disassociating slaves from marginalized, non-Christian groups in Algiers. Thus, the play provides a perspective that shifts away from imagined American sufferings in captivity to one that asserts national freedom and promotes the ideals of Christian benevolence. This discursive pattern reiterates the relative selflessness, forgiveness, and generosity of American Christians compared to Algerians.

This chapter argues that these distinct patterns of opposition reinforce paradoxically the slaves' freedom and the captors' inherent slavish nature. I call this narrative trope a "reverse captivity perspective." While the captors are vilified as unruly tyrants, submissive "subjects," or cunning converts, depictions of which

¹⁷ *Susanna Rowson*, Patricia L. Parker. It was first presented on June 30, 1794 in Philadelphia, and then "repeated as a popular stock piece when the company performed in Baltimore and New York" (72).

suggest moral captivity, the Americans are esteemed as “liberators,” entitling them a certain authority over their captors and affirming the superiority of their national identity. This, the reverse captivity perspective, creates a fictional space wherein the captives’ self-denial of captivity, with claims to moral freedom, and Christian benevolence, illuminate a national identity that is religiously exclusive. As displayed in the U.S. cultural imagination, the answer to the question of what it means to be an American is identified as inherently Christian, suggesting that the idea of citizenship fundamentally precludes religious otherness, despite constitutional law.

In Rowson’s play, lost family members held captive in separate locations in Algiers are subsequently united. Rebecca, an American woman, after privately marrying a British soldier against her father’s wishes, is separated from her husband as a result of a series of unfortunate events during the American Revolution. She is reunited with her long-lost husband and her daughter, Olivia (played by Rowson herself in the 1794 production),¹⁸ both of whom are imprisoned in the Dey of Algiers’ palace. Unknowingly, Rebecca and her son, Augustus, who travel together from the U.S., become enslaved by Ben Hassan, a Jewish man from England who converts to Islam as a means of enjoying certain Islamic privileges in Algiers. Adding to this plentitude of coincidental gatherings, Olivia’s American fiancée, Henry, along with a fellow countryman, Frederic, are also enslaved in Algiers. Surrounding the plot of familial and national reunion, Rowson arranges many Algerian characters, such as Fetnah, Zoriana, Selima, Dey Muley Moloc,¹⁹ and Hassan in such a way that

¹⁸ As listed in the “Dramatis Personae” in the Copley edition.

¹⁹ See etymology described in OED: “French *dey*, Turkish *dāī* ‘maternal uncle’. Also ‘a friendly title formerly given to middle-aged or old people, *esp.* among the Janissaries; and hence in Algiers appropriated at length to the commanding officer of that corps.”

juxtaposes cultural and religious identity. By doing so, Rowson redefines the notion of captivity and the boundaries of the U.S. “native” land. The Algerian characters occupy a space in the play that reflects a critique of Islamic law or, at least, a mimicry²⁰ of the American nationalistic ideals introduced by the captives.

Since its conception, Rowson’s play has received considerable scholarly attention, especially with regard to its promotion of a female presence in the national sphere. In the introduction of the Copley edition, Jennifer Margulis and Karen M. Poremski associate the play with a celebration of American purity and liberty, and yet identify the play’s “over-arching concern” to be about gender relations (XXVI). In a book review of the play’s Copley Press edition, Timothy Marr concludes that Rowson declares a fiery stance “against all men who seek to subordinate American women” (112). Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, on a different note, emphasizes race in the gender claims and argues that Rowson’s “concern with extending political subjectivity to white women leads her to implicitly construct and sustain racist assumptions” (423). For Dillon, Rowson’s racialized identity politics foregrounds normative whiteness to leverage the status of white women. Dillon also suggests that racialization in the U.S. is linked with historical modes of globalization²¹ through her two interrelated claims: that “race emerges as an aspect of gender construction within republican and nationalist politics,” and that “the creation of new forms of nationalized (and

²⁰ In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha describes colonial mimicry as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a *subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite* [Bhabha’s emphasis]. Which is to say that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (123).

²¹ Dillon argues that “earlier historical modes of globalization are closely associated with nationalist development rather than antithetical or irrelevant to it” (407), even though the current form of globalization, discussed as emerging in the twentieth century by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negro, is rather different from the eighteenth century.

racialized) identity occurs in a global-transatlantic context rather than a solely national one” (408). By emphasizing the “nationalized (and racialized) identity” in relation to gender and globalization, this critical discourse has thus ignored the role of religion in Rowson’s construction of racial identity politics. Christianity is essential in interpreting this play and should be discussed in relation to racialization.

This chapter explores how racial and religious differences between American captives and Algerian captors are intertwined in Rowson’s play. The whiteness that Dillon has identified as constitutive to American nation-building, in fact, stems from another prominent theme in Rowson’s work: racial implications of religious intolerance. My analysis of key passages reveal ways in which Rowson is preoccupied with fanaticized religious discourse, racializing religion through its confirmation of whiteness and Christianity as intricately tied. Hence, the convergence of a racialized and religious national identity places white Christianity at the center of Rowson’s play. For example, when a central character, Olivia, reunites with her American mother and British father, racialization legitimizes “both British parentage and American women’s virtue” (Dillon 422). In contrast to the Algerians and Jews, Dillon argues that English paternity is “bleached and purified, and the virtuous daughter emerges as both loyal to her English culture (genealogically pure) and to American politics (committed to freedom)” (422). However, the purifying effect of English paternity does not extend to the religious other. British-born Hassan and his daughter Fetnah, are also characters with mixed birthright and/or blood, yet are not redeemed at the end of the play. If birthright and blood are determining factors in racialization, one might argue that Hassan and Fetnah are excluded from whiteness because of their

uprooted British Jewishness. Olivia's paternal genealogy is depicted as American because it aligns not only with British national origin, but also with the shared characteristics of Christianity. Racialization in the play can only be understood, then, through a multifaceted critique of the complex racial, religious, and gender formations that constitute racialization in the play.

Intersections of National Identity: Theater, Immigration, and Christian

Benevolence

In the first year of its stage production, *Slaves in Algiers* was one of three American plays produced during the first season of Philadelphia's historic Chestnut Street Theatre.²² Initially, Rowson involved herself in a stage performance in England before being recruited by Thomas Wignell, the manager of the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. Born in Portsmouth, England, Susanna Rowson arrived in the colonies in 1767 at the age of five with her father, Lieutenant Haswell. Mr. Haswell married an American woman, Rachel Woodward, and settled in Boston until the onset of the American Revolution, at which point the family resettled in Britain as part of a prisoner exchange.²³ It was not until fifteen years after her and her family's departure from the U.S. that Rowson returned to America, this time to Philadelphia with her husband and sister-in-law. Even though Rowson was relatively young when she first

²² Encyclopedia of Philadelphia. Vol II by Joseph Jackson. Note that the first Chestnut Street Theatre was also called the New Theatre to differentiate it from the Old Theatre, also called the Southwark Theatre.

²³ Patricia L. Parker. *Susanna Rowson*. Chapter 1 "Life and Times." Rowson's father Lieutenant Haswell petitioned for a removal in 1778.

left the U.S., Patricia L. Parker claims that Rowson's early experience in Massachusetts "taught her to respect Americans" and, having familiarized herself with an American audience, upon her return, Rowson used "American chauvinism" for the play's popularity (8, 69).²⁴ While Parker uses the term "American chauvinism" as an expression of patriotism to symbolize America as a nation of independence and democracy, Rowson's own reflections during her more than two years of detention during the American Revolution suggests that she viewed Christian-like benevolence as an inherent feature of American patriotism:

Then it was that the benevolence and philanthropy which so eminently distinguish the sons and daughters of Columbia, made an indelible impression on my heart; an impression which neither time nor chance can obliterate; for while their political principles obliged them to afflict, the humanity, the Christian like benevolence of their souls, incited them to wipe the tears of sorrow from the eyes of my parents, to mitigate their sufferings and render those afflictions in some measure supportable.²⁵

A commitment to philanthropy and benevolence distinguishes the sons and daughters of Columbia²⁶ from being violent revolutionaries during the trying times of the American Revolution. For Rowson, the kindness of the soul and "in some measure," Christian-like humanitarianism, amends the hardship of political conflict. Rowson

²⁴ Interestingly, Parker finds the play's popularity surprising because of, she argues, the use of stereotypical characters and unpromising language (69).

²⁵ *A Memoir of Mrs. Susanna Rowson, with Elegant and Illustrative Extracts from her Writings in Prose and Poetry*. Nason, Elias, 1811-1887 (83).

²⁶ In *America as Art*, Joshua C. Taylor describes the figure of America not belonging "to geography or a particular race but to the family of personified virtues" (7). Taylor states that especially with the Revolution, America "in symbol stood for a social ideal, or a clutter of ideals, and the symbol was recognized as such, both at home and abroad" (7).

unequivocally reflects these ideals in her melodrama. In *The Literature of the Revolutionary and Early National Periods*,²⁷ Michael T. Gilmore argues that the drama of the “early Republic was intimately tied to the civic sphere” and identifies American drama as the most propagandistic literary genre despite the initial resistance during the revolutionary period (573). Gilmore explains that skepticism toward theater in Revolutionary America, partly due to both drama’s association with Great Britain and the Puritans’ antitheatrical sentiment, encouraged advocates of the stage to engage in contemporary discourse and civic engagement (577).

The daughter of a former British soldier and English immigrant, Rowson displays loyalty to America by cultivating U.S. national values. She lays out her objective of the performance in the preface of the play’s print version:

My chief aim has been, to offer to the Public a Dramatic Entertainment, which, while it might excite a smile, or call forth the tear of sensibility, might contain no one sentiment, in the least prejudicial, to the moral or political principles of the government under which I live. On the contrary, it has been my endeavour, to place the social virtues in the fairest point of view, and hold up, to merited contempt and ridicule, their opposite vices. (6)

Rowson’s interventions are timely. She promotes “social virtues,” which serve as patriotic tropes, against contempt for “opposite vices” of other nations and religions. She embraces the opportunity to use her dramatic dialogues as a rhetoric for the confirmation and dissemination of the new nation’s values. She predicts scrutiny over the genre and her own position as an immigrant and assures her audience that the

²⁷ A book section in *The Cambridge History of American Literature*. Sacvan Bercovitch.

sentiments stirred by the performative aspects of the genre are appropriate for the priorities of the nation to which she tailors her play. Furthermore, she ensures allegiance to the nation and atones for her British genealogy through her authorship and acting. Her preoccupation with defending American liberty and religious integrity in North Africa invites the audience to participate in “moral” and “political principles.”

Given this context, Rowson transforms the stage into a medium for broadcasting an exclusive form of U.S. national identity that is demarcated by racialized Christian uniformity. During the epilogue, Rowson is called to the stage by the prompter: “COME—Mrs. Rowson! Come!—Why don’t you hurry?” (77) Rowson, admittedly “almost terrify’d to death,” intimately addresses her “generous friends” in the audience with an inceptive proposition to “supreme dominion” of women over “the lordly tyrant man” (77). It does not take long for Rowson to apologize for this transgressive suggestion:

We hold in silken chains—the lordly tyrant man.

But pray, forgive this flippancy—indeed,

Of all your clemency I stand in need.

To own the truth, the scenes this night display’d

Are only fictions—drawn by fancy’s aid

This what I wish—But we have a cause to fear,

No ray of comfort, the sad bosoms cheer

Of many a Christian, shut from light and day,

In bondage, languishing their lives away. (78)

In this address, Rowson blurs fact and fiction. The phrase “silken chains” is an interesting paradox: the delicate and expensive nature of silk contrasts with the conceived image of bondage. Soon after she declares these provocative remarks, she then attributes her bold suggestions to “fictions” of her fancy and begs for forgiveness. What she is not apologetic about, however, is urgent concern about Christian captives in Algiers. After she dismisses her daring intrusion into gender relations as a form of her fancy, the tone shifts. She rechannels the audience’s attention to a more pressing matter of American slaves in north Africa and appeals to the interest of a Christian sufferer whom she imagines being “shut from day and light.” Similar to the title of her play, Rowson’s epilogue evokes the idea of chattel slavery in the U.S. as a way to highlight the apparent testing circumstances of dismayed Christians. Implied with the title and revisited in the epilogue, these references to slavery are not used as a disapprobation of the institution of slavery, but rather to secure the altruism of her audience for the Christian “slaves” in Algiers.

The extent of her dramatic plea and the conditions faced by characters draw a stark contrast with the case she presents. In other words, there is an absence of white slavery in the play. While the implied dangers “in bondage” provoke sympathy for a fellow Christian, exacerbating the narratives of Barbary captivity, the solemn language of slavery legitimizes public engagement within the communal setting of the theater. The overt nationalist message, then, reminds the audience of their ultimate civic duty, which is to help save the Christian captives.

Denial of Slavery: “Call us not Slaves”

The global encounters of the play enact an Americanness that is embedded within the religious integrity of the white captives, one which is inevitably defined in relation to protecting and spreading liberty from the slavishness of others. The play solidifies a U.S. national identity that is fixated on the religious, social, and cultural stereotypes, as the reverse captivity perspective allows the Christian “slaves” to declare themselves “free” of captivity; this, in a way, renders the captors “the captives.” The central characters secure their independence by denying their captivity, and, by extension, denying oppressive Islam. This rejection requires them to defend nationhood in the face of a potential conversion and assimilation into mutually exclusive national and religious values. Though Rowson entertains the audience with the potential dangers of the enslavement of Christians, in the play, slavery is attributed to non-Christian infidels and converts.

In *Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution*, Nicole Eustace demonstrates the cultural and political significance of emotions as external expressions that claim global status and create “micro-hierarchies” amongst particular groups (13). Eustace claims that the “spirit of liberty arose from the careful blend of genteel feeling and popular passion” is linked with patriotism (385).²⁸ In this connection, American slaves’ resistance to any form of integration inevitably results in an absolute rebuttal of their subjugation, which they perform by reciting their cultural and moral superiority that distance them from the

²⁸ Eustace refers to Washington’s dedication to moral emotions- “that virtuous spirits- motivated love of country, devotion to freedom, and despisement of slavery grew out of eighteenth-century versions of classical theories.” She ties his assertions to “the Aristotelian teaching that *thumos*, or spirit, distinguished those with natural claims to liberty from those who were inherently slavish” (385).

religious other. Augustus, Rebecca and Constant's son, states patriotically: "an't I an American, and I am sure you have often told me, in a right cause, the Americans did not fear anything" (55). Augustus, who is referred to as "a boy born in Columbia" emphasizes the importance of maintaining a fearless American identity in order to rebel against the practice of slavery (18). Augustus' inherent bravery is confirmed by Rebecca, who describes it as a "sacred flame which heaven itself fixed in the human mind" and who urges Augustus to "preserve that independent spirit, that dares assert the rights of the oppressed, by power unawed, unchecked by servile fear" (55). Augustus' dedication to freedom is about advocating on behalf of the oppressed to outbrave the oppressor. Similarly, his countryman Frederic declares that he would rather die from "a struggle for freedom" than "live in ignominious bondage," utterly rejecting the idea of accepting slavery (26). In fact, without exception, all American characters in bondage intrinsically feel entitled to freedom and display aversion for subjugation.

The American women's quest for freedom is not only about protecting virtue during captivity, but embodying the national persona. Malini Johar Schueller finds Rowson's play particularly fascinating in its "attempt to negotiate an emancipatory feminist discourse through the possibilities of Algerian Orient while simultaneously striving to keep the discourse hierarchically raced" (61). Schueller interprets Rowson's preoccupation with women's rights as an interruption to "the Columbiad vision of the nation as a new empire spreading its message," represented by the masculine hero, and argues that Rowson recasts "the raced rhetoric of empire" to be about "liberty/slavery of women" (61). Schueller's remarks remind Olivia and Rebecca's resilience in

protecting national and religious affiliation. For example, Rebecca avoids the sexual advances of her captor, a renegade Ben Hassan, and her daughter Olivia circumvents “licentious” harem traditions despite being pressured to renounce her Christianity and marry the Dey Moloc. Olivia devotedly resists Islamic conversion and claims that her Christianity “has hitherto preserved [her] from improper solicitations” (26).²⁹ Olivia, often referred to as “the daughter of Columbia,” agrees to marry Muley Moloc, the dey of Algiers, to save her father and her long-lost fiancé, Henry from the dey’s vengeance. Yet she resolves to kill herself before marriage as an ultimate sacrifice. Olivia’s union with the dey would free her from slavery, yet conversion to Islam would become the true captivity. In response to Olivia’s selfless sacrifice, Rebecca echoes, “we will die together; for never a daughter of Columbia, and a Christian, tarnish her name by apostasy or live the slave of a despotic tyrant” (72). Rather than declare Olivia an apostate, Rebecca, a personification of the new nation, welcomes death as an escape from slavery. Rebecca’s long-separated British husband, Constant, as his name suggests, is faithful to his moral principles and eager to sacrifice his own life to save his daughter.

For the rest of the American slaves, freedom of will is also a matter of life or death. After their attempt to escape, though in chains, they challenge the dey and show their willingness to die for freedom rather than to stay enslaved:

CONSTANT: ... Oh! Gracious heaven, protect my darling from this tyrant; let my life pay the dear purchase of her freedom.

²⁹ The endnote of the play's Copley edition states that Olivia’s fate has more to do with Rowson’s portrayal of the dey than with Olivia’s status as a Christian” (26). For a Muslim marriage to be valid, non-Muslim captive would need to convert unless they are forced to live in harem as a concubine.

MULEY: Bear them to the torture: who and what am I, that vile slave dares
braves me to my face?

HENRY: ... we know we must die, and we are prepared to meet our fate, like
men: impotent vain boaster, call us not slaves;— you are a slave indeed, to
rude ungoverned passion; to pride, to avarice and lawless love;—exhaust your
cruelty in finding tortures for us, and we will smiling tell you, the blow that
ends our lives, strikes off our chains, and set our souls at liberty. (64)

Here, Henry suggests that he is not enslaved to his moral compass. For him, it is better
to stay a literal slave and heroically die than to be enslaved to one's passions, like the
dey. The dey, previously referred to as the fearsome Turk who rests his forceful hand
on the scimitar,³⁰ becomes reduced to a demasculinized “slave indeed.”

As much as the love of freedom is inherent to the captives, moral bondage and
mechanical obedience is inherent to the religious other. Ben Hassan, originally a Jew
who converts to Islam to avoid punishment for fraud in England, is the epitome of
treachery. He is referred to as the “little Israelite,” which reflects perceptions about his
Jewishness and his self-serving actions, which are at times revealed to the audience by
the stage direction “aside” (22). By hailing a stereotypically cunning Jewish image,
the play draws attention to the laws and systems that allow Ben Hassan to employ his
crafty plans. Also referred to as a “hypocrite” and a “turn’d Mahometan”³¹ who wears
a turban and swears by Mahomet to gain the trust of others, Ben Hassan dexterously
adopts Islamic rules verbatim for economic and social privileges (25). While he views

³⁰ See scimitar; referred as a symbol of Eastern rulers’ ruthlessness.

³¹ Indicates his conversion to Islam.

love of liberty as a value common in both Algiers and America, Rebecca outcries the differences between each's understanding of the term:

HASSAN. Ish, but our law gives us great many wives— our law gives liberty in love; you are an American and you must love liberty.

REBECCA. Hold, Hassan; prostitute not the sacred word by applying it to licentiousness; the sons and daughters of liberty, take justice, truth, and mercy, for their leaders, when they list under her glorious banners. (21)

In his interpretation, Ben Hassan's mistakes "liberty in love" with the love of liberty. This sacrilege sexualizes liberty as a debauchery of men, whereas captives take "her" to be a symbol of "justice, truth and mercy" that guides the leader of the nation. It is also important to note that, here, "liberty" is synonymous with America: Rebecca says "sons and daughters of liberty," rather than "sons and daughters of Columbia," to emphasize the birthplace of liberty. Ben Hassan's daughter, Fetnah, also refers to the Islamic notion of having "a great many wives at a time"³² as a transgression that distorts the true meaning of liberty she learns from the Americans (16). Therefore, the Islamic understanding of liberty sanctions polygamy and offers liberty as a source for licentiousness and promiscuity.

Furthermore, in contrast to philanthropy that favors public over private good, the abundance of wealth in Algiers symbolizes an entrapment. Captives' interactions in North Africa also point to the temptations of Algerian wealth displayed in Algiers. Unlike converted Jews, whose greediness motivates conversion, and Muslims, whose wealth suppresses, the captives see the merit of giving. Material wealth is devalued if

³² "Under the law of Koran, a man is permitted to have four wives, provided that he treat them fairly." Endnote. *Slaves in Algiers* (16).

not used for the moral good. Rebecca is provoked by Ben Hassan's false accusation that friends in her "native land" will not ransom her. She appeals to altruism, with an emphasis on benevolence:

How readily does the sordid mind judge of others by its own contracted feelings; you, who much I fear, worship no deity but gold, who could sacrifice friendship, nay even the ties of nature at the shrine of idolatry, think other hearts as selfish as your own;— but there are souls whom the afflicted never cry in vain, who, to dry the widow's tear, or free the captive, would share their last possession. —Blest spirits of philanthropy, who inhabit my native land, never will I doubt your friendship, for sure I am, you never will neglect the wretched. (21)

As this passage rebukes Hassan's slavish greed, it also emphasizes charity and mercy. Initially, Rebecca directs her response to Ben Hassan's vile persona, calling him a worshipper of material goods only. Then, she acknowledges the presence of "souls" who would "free the captive" at any cost to themselves. She follows this by addressing the "spirits of philanthropy," personified as inhabitants of the "native land." Rebecca's use of second-person plural inspires the audience to be friendly enforcers of liberation. To inhabit the "native land" signifies the U.S. settler colonial notion of "civilizing," not to preserve indigenous culture but to dominate and to "save" them from their misery.³³ This historical and philosophical justification of claims to "native land" foreshadows Rebecca's rescue of the female characters from slavish miseries. Hence,

³³ See *How the Indians Lost Their Land*, Stuart Banner. Reference to the assumption that "with proper training Indians were capable of becoming as "civilized" as whites, and that the compassionate thing to do was to offer that kind of training— in Christianity, in European-style agriculture in literacy, and all the other characteristics of civilized life" (Introduction, 5).

U.S. national identity is assured in a dichotomy between non-Christian and Christian beliefs, and in fears of tarnishing core national values. The American captives' willingness to die together, rather than to give into slavery and "renounce [their] faith," suggests liberty is essential for cultural, religious, and national identification (65). The captives' heroic statements amalgamate Americanness and Christianity, and by extension, unite the daughters and sons of Columbia under a moral quest to save the other.

Infidels: Markers of Generous, Forgiving Liberators

The paradoxical rhetoric employed between nations extends to that employed between believers, where Christians are defined as liberators and non-Christians as oppressors and oppressed. Algerian characters, through overly dramatic stereotypical descriptions, are presented as inherently inhuman, capable only of acting on an unwavering loyalty to degraded Islamic practices. They are depicted as gullible, unsophisticated, and unthinking automatons. For example, Sadi, a servant, debuts wearing a robe and turban, artifacts that emphasize his Islamic origins, and performs the role of a simpleton who has no sense of direction in his "master's" great house (47). Likewise, Selima, a native Algerian, is surprised about Fetnah's condemnation of Algerian customs. When questioned about how "any woman of spirit can gulp [slavery] down," Selima answers that women are "accustomed to it" (46). Selima is a subservient "subject" of Algiers and devotedly describes Moloc as a "kind and generous master" (46).

Algerian men are given an epithet dreadful beasts marked by physical and spiritual deformations. They are portrayed as temperamental and described as having beastly features. Three main male characters, two Muslim Algerians and a 'turn'd-Turk' Jew, are dehumanized and often described as having a physical deformity. Fetnah is in constant fear of being killed by the dey, who twists "his whiskers and [knits] his great nettle brows," carries his seymetar, and scowls as if to say, "if you don't love me, I'll cut your head off" (15). Mustapha, dey's right hand, is caricatured: "the great, ugly thing...bow[s] till the tip of his long, hooked nose almost touch[es] to the toe of his slipper" (14). The guards of the harem are referred to as "creatures," with "great, black, goggle-ey'd [and] frightful heads" (38). Fetnah comparatively describes Algerian men: one must be "blind and stupid" for not preferring "a young, handsome, good-humored Christian, to an old ugly, ill-natured Turk" (46). This characterization of Algerians, in contrast, defines the Christian "captives" personifying each distinct archetype as the embodiment of the nation. American "captives" are marked with the absence of what forms the basis for the racialized Islamic nation.

As this perspective reconstructs the degenerative cultural and religious other as a slave, it introduces the morality of Christianity, cultivates infidels' love of liberty and provides a platform to enact freedom in a transatlantic setting. The American captives' denial of slavery, and as I have argued their simultaneous reestablishment of the captors as captives, is also staged with a reformation of the outdated and corrupt governing body. When the slaves of Algiers coordinate a mutiny and ask for the immediate release of Christian slaves during the play's climax, they revolutionize Algiers with ease, instilling their national ideals. Constant harmoniously joins the

Americans, who orchestrate the sudden transformation of the despotic Muslim ruler, the Dey Muley Moloc, and the system he represents:

MULEY. ... I fear from following the steps of my ancestors. I have greatly erred: teach me then, you who so well know how to practice what is right, how to amend my faults.

CONSTANT. Open your prison doors; give freedom to your people; sink the name of subject in the endearing epithet of fellow-citizens; —then you will be loved and revered— then will you find, in promoting the happiness of others, you have secured your own.

MULEY. Henceforth, then I will reject all power, but such as my united friends shall think me incapable of abusing. Hassan, you are free— to my generous conquerors what can I say? (74)

Rowson's staging undertakes an Algerian revolution through the despotic ruler of Algiers's cultural reformation that establishes national equality and freedom. The dey, who is introduced as "the great and mighty Ottoman," a threatening heathen, has an epiphany (63). As he asks for forgiveness, he talks of himself and the captives as "united friends" And when he expresses remorse for the suffering he caused. He describes the captives as "generous conquerors" whose guidance and teachings he solicits. In return, the captives introduce the idea of citizenship to replace the overbearing label of "subjects" and the ideals of democracy to overcome the wrongdoings of the Islamic government. However, because he is enchanted by the prospect of redemption, the dey is framed as the subject of his new conquerors. He rejects all power and leaves his autonomy to his captives. In this moment of

resolution, the captives liberate the Dey from his ancestral wrongdoings and reform the archaic system.

Schueler argues that the American nation, “embodied as virtue and liberty, was seen as a regenerative, moral power, needed to awaken and enlighten a torpid Algerian culture” (75), a sentiment that reflected revolutionary undertakings. The play’s imagined victory over an oppressive establishment asserts moral superiority not in the traditional sense of colonial settings; rather, it spreads ideals of freedom and citizenry through the racialized language of the plays. While this perspective offers Americans a space to instill their ideals, it also solidifies their commitment to the very principles they spread. Henry urges other slaves to not act on impulse and abuse their power, exclaiming: “Oh my friends! Let us not, on this auspicious night, when we hope to emancipate ourselves from slavery, tinge the bright standard of liberty with blood” (50). It is not revenge, but captives’ civil manners are what distinguish them from the oppressor. Relatedly, before the American captives forgive the dey without punishment, their generosity and despise for revenge distinguishes them from what the Islamic law is implied to demand:

SEBASTIAN. Great and mighty Ottoman, suffer my friends to shew [sic] you what pretty bracelets these are. —Oh, you old dog, we’ll give you the bastinado³⁴ presently.

FREDERIC... we neither mean to enslave your person, or put a period to your existence— we are free men, and while we assert the rights of men, we dare not infringe the privileges of a fellow creature.

³⁴ OED: “A blow with a stick, cane, or similar weapon; esp. one given upon the soles of the feet. Now frequently archaic and in historical contexts.”

SEBASTIAN. By the law of retaliation, he should be a slave.

REBECCA. By the Christian law, no man should be a slave; it is a word so abject, that, but to speak it dyes the cheek with crimson. Let us assert our own prerogative, to be free ourselves, but let us not throw on another's neck, the chains we scorn to wear.

FREDERIC. Ben Hassan, your avarice, treachery, and cruelty should be severely punished; for, if any one deserves slavery, it is he who could raise his own fortune on the miseries of others. (73)

Rebecca's views of slavery are not based on U.S. constitutional decrees, but rather they derive from Christianity. Although the Spaniard Sebastian suggests enslaving and bastinadoing the dey "by the law of retaliation," the American understanding of "Christian law" rejects slavery. In contrast to the followers of Islam, Frederic claims that "free men" do not dare encroach upon the privileges of a "fellow create." Rebecca connects Frederic's assertion of the rights of men to a forceful affirmation of "[l]et us" which unites the captives under the inherent Christian right to sovereignty. When she says "let us not throw on another's neck," Rebecca urges the free citizens to reject the notion of slavery, not directly to assert freedom for all, but in order to disengage rebelled slaves from being oppressors. Frederic rebukes Ben Hassan's misdeeds of taking advantage of others' misfortunes and does not forgive him right away. Rebecca, nevertheless, is more generous to Ben Hassan: "you have dealt unjustly by me, but I forgive you," a gesture that credits the forgiver (59). Religion is a guiding light for the nation, and the religious laws sustain freedom and democracy in its purest sense.

The ancestral affiliation with the Old World's system of governing creates an opportunity for New World principles to dramatically reform the corrupt system and free the citizens- a mission the captives succeed:

HENRY. ... your future conduct prove [sic] how much you value the welfare of your fellow-creatures— to-morrow, we shall leave your capital, and return to our native land, where liberty has established her court— where the warlike Eagle extends his glittering pinions in the sunshine of prosperity.

OLIVIA. Long, long, may that prosperity continue— may freedom spread her benign influence thro' every nation, till the bright Eagle, united with the dove and olive-branch, waves high, the acknowledged standard of the world. THE
END. (74-75)

The term “native land” exposes the colonial narrative in the establishment of liberty of “her court” that points to a change of power from the “confined” natives to the liberators, who recultivate the land with prosperity. In *The Anarchy of Empire*, Amy Kaplan discusses American exceptionalism as “an argument for boundless expansion” (16). This exceptional ideology justifies its position as an exemplary model for the foreign nations. The promising figure of a “warlike Eagle,” symbolizing supreme authority,³⁵ with its dedication to liberty and prosperity, armors America from any threat to its establishment.

³⁵ See Joshua C. Taylor's discussion of symbols in *America as Art*.

Unassimilable Women: Impediments to Immigration

Rowson credits Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's *Don Quixote* for inspiration, and she apologizes for the errata of her "hastily executed" work undertaken over a relatively short, two-month period, adding that "the rest is entirely the offspring of fancy" (5, 6). Rowson's persistence in plainly situating her work in fictional inspirations is seemingly counter to the way in which her play functions as a social and political commentary. Although the play bases Zoriana, the Dey's daughter, on Cervantes' fictional character Zoraida,³⁶ it envisions an alternative fate for the "fair Moriscan" (30). Cervantes casts his Algerian princess, Zoraida, married and settled in Spain with the Christian slave, whom she ransoms, while Rowson's Zoriana does not end with a romantic union. In the introduction of the play's Copley edition, Jennifer Margulis and Karen M. Poremski convincingly argue that "Rowson believed, like others of her time, that the influx of Jews and other non-Anglo immigrants could only weaken the United States" (XXV). As the play kindles a sense of freedom in many characters and entertains the possibility of an adopted home in the U.S., none of the Algerian characters are granted an entrance. Unlike Ben Hassan's assimilation to Algiers, no other characters are allowed to emigrate from Algiers to the U.S. despite their eagerness to assimilate. Even though that possibility of immigration is entertained for Fetnah and Zoriana, the ending falls short. The failure of interracial marriage calls attention to religious tensions, implying that integration poses a threat to American ideals. In Cervantes' fiction, Zoraida's migration to Spain signifies an

³⁶ In his article, "Cervantes' Captive's in Tale in English and American Literature from Massinger to Tyler," Clark Colahan argues that there is a balance between religion and sensuality. Cervantes' Zoraida is described like Virgin Mary and eventually "captive's desires for sexual pleasure with her and for liberty do not come to conflict" (884).

acceptance of religious conversion and interracial marriage. However, Rowson denies that same access to Zoriana; instead, Rowson reimagines a changed ending for the Algerian princess, Zoriana, and the Christian slave, Henry.

Constant's reunion with his family complicates the discourse that heavily depends on the distinctiveness of the American self. The genealogy of American heritage depends on European ancestry, and England is the mother country that gave birth to American resistance and independence. If Constant's British birth grants him legitimization, how then is Hassan, as I have argued, not deemed as the ultimate betrayer? Furthermore, if British birthright allows Constant the possibility of marrying someone of a different nationality against the consent of his parents, why then does Fetnah's self-identified British birth not bring her the same benefits? I argue that Constant's privilege is his Christian faith and the moral guidance his faith provides. In relatively short dialogues, Constant expresses a passion for ideals that are shared by the American captives, which shows the extent of his successful assimilation into the new nation. One can argue that Rowson herself is an immigrant and has assimilated successfully, yet her unique genealogy connects her to America in ways that are not possible for Zoriana and Fetnah.

Rowson depicts Algerian women as overtly eager to be "saved" from the burden of suffocating patriarchy and as compelling followers of the prospect of equality in the U.S., where it is claimed that "virtue in either sex is the only mark of superiority" (17). Her reliance on the submissive relationship between the so-called brutish captors and the confined women of Algiers is shown to be intrinsic to Islamic principles. Even as these female characters yearn for the land of Christian liberty and

despise Islam's inclination for slavery, they are, at best, duplicates of their American counterparts and a reformed versions of their corrupt fathers. Zoriana and Fetnah are praised in the play for their Christian-like bravery and self will, but they are not dramatically different from Algerian woman Selima's unquestioned submission. Zoriana simply acts as a mirror image of Olivia, and Fetnah repeats Rebecca's teachings. Fetnah's ability to convincingly fabricate stories, the "little infidel's ready wit" as Frederic puts it, is shared with her deceitful father Ben Hassan (42). Similarly, Zoriana's romantic attachment to Henry is reminiscent of her father's desire to marry Olivia.

Female characters are constrained to Algiers despite their desire to leave. When Henry encourages Zoriana to gather his ransom, Zoriana pours out "more gold and jewels" and ransoms several slaves in the name of heartfelt Christianity (35). Zoriana declares to Henry: "I never knew their value till I found they could ransom *you* from slavery" (35). Rowson's emphasis on the italicized personal pronoun "*you*" highlights the fact that Zoriana's motivation is not a selfless act, but rather a romantic gesture toward Henry. Zoriana later confesses that her "actions are impelled by [the] tenderer passion" proving a sensual motivation instead of acting solely for the benefit of the common good (33). As the plot unfolds, Olivia's presence obstructs Zoriana's potential interracial and interfaith marriage with Henry. In many ways, however, Zoriana is similar to Olivia: they are both models of perfection and share a physical resemblance, so much so that Olivia asks Zoriana to take her place as Constant's daughter and Henry's fiance. Though Olivia's double, Zoriana's religious origin restricts her engagement, as Sebastian recalls, "what a pity it is she's Mahometan"

(48). Therefore, Zoriana's compatibility with Olivia's morals and her readiness to become Christian is not sufficient to fulfill Olivia's position.

The play's first scene opens with Fetnah desiring to free herself from the Dey's harem in Algiers. Fetnah is the embodiment of national and religious heterogeneity; she took her "first breath in England" as a daughter of Ben Hassan, who, at that time, identified himself as a Jew, yet she was raised in Algiers under the principles of Islam. She alienates herself from the Islamic culture and often expresses her discontent statements such as, "Lord, I'm not a Moriscan;³⁷ I hate 'em all, there is nothing I wish so much as to get away from them" (39). Fetnah's disapproval accentuates the degraded position of Algerian women as slaves of patriarchy, which therefore implies that, as the harem walls literally trap Algerian women, Islam imprisons their souls. Fetneh prays for freedom while acknowledging a need for a savior in order to escape: "Lord, I wish I could run away, but that's impossible; there is no getting over these nasty high walls. I do wish some dear, sweet, Christian man, would fall in love with me, break the garden gates, and carry me off" (38). As Fetnah detests Islam as the source of her physical and spiritual confinement, she yearns to be freed by a Christian savior. Fetnah's identity is further complicated through her "natural antipathy" to Moorish manners, which is bolstered by Rebecca who nourishes in Fetnah's mind "the love of liberty" that blinds Fetnah with a disdain for Algiers as the land of captivity and a desire for the U.S. as the land of liberty and peace (16). The dogmatic and yet maternal Rebecca teases out the cultural and religious juxtaposition between the two nations: one where Fetnah is forced to live and the other where Fetnah dreams to live.

³⁷ See OED definition: "Moorish, or related to the Moors." OED refers to Rowson's play as one of the first usages and quotes Fetnah's protest.

With the reverse captivity perspective, America is imagined with the absence of what symbolizes Algiers: the “charming place, where there are no bolts and bars; no mutes³⁸ and guards; no bowstrings and seymetars.—Oh! it must be a dear delightful country, where women do just what they please” (38). Fetnah represents the complications of national integration with an absolutist rehearsal of Rebecca’s teachings without an ability to appropriate. Fetnah’s articulation of the “dear delightful country” animates the image of uncontrolled autonomy and a dreamy yearning for a place that allows women to do “what they please.” Therefore, Fetnah’s translation of the concept of freedom is a danger to virtue, and resides with unrestrained morality of a libertine.

A brief exchange between Henry and Fetnah shows the extent of Fetnah’s incomplete national and religious transformation. Fetnah is in danger of being “shut up” by the civility of her saviors who attempt to provide her protection. Henry chivalrously offers that Fetnah stay behind for her safety during the slave rebellion:

FETNAH. What, shut me up! — Do you take me for a coward?

HENRY. We respect you as a woman, and would shield you from danger.

FETNAH. A woman! — Why, so I am; but in the cause of love or friendship, a woman can face danger with as much spirit, and as little fear, as the bravest man amongst you. — Do you lead the way; I’ll follow to the end. (52)

Fetnah resists being protected by the men and heroically declares herself a noble ally for the cause of freeing the Christian captives. This very moment could have been Rebecca’s protegee proving herself in favor of the bold proto-feminist move that

³⁸ “A servant deprived, usually deliberately, of the power of speech; esp. One who serves a Turkish Sultan” OED.

Rowson sparks in the epilogue. However, the spell of Fetnah's exemplary bravery falls short once again. Sebastian shouts in response to Fetnah's protests of being left behind:

Bravo! Excellent! Bravissimo! — Why, 'tis a little body; but, ecod [sic], she's a devil of spirit. — It's a fine thing to meet with a woman that has little fire in her composition. I never much liked your milk-and-water ladies: to be sure, they are easily managed— but your spirited lasses require taming; they make a man look about him— dear, sweet, angry creatures. (52)

This affirmation from Sebastian, the comic figure, demeans Fetnah's outspoken and rebellious nature. Fetnah's passion for love and friendship is adulterated by her uncontrolled spirit that requires "taming" and managing. She crosses the line of cultural values when she repeats Rebecca's unmediated statement, "women was [sic] never formed to be the abject slave of man. Nature has made us equal with [men], and gave us the power to render ourselves superior" (16). Fetnah fabricates a parrot-like version of gender relations that is not internalized. Even as Rowson makes similar remarks about women's freedom in the epilogue, as discussed above, her tone is challenging yet feminized. In the epilogue, Rowson offers to pursue "nature's gentle plan" with a sweet care and feminine gentleness (77). On the other hand, Fetnah's unsubdued voice is dictating and unladylike. She misinterprets the meaning of liberty and combats subjugation often with crafty plans. Fetnah daringly lectures to Selima, an Algerian woman, that "if you let the men see you are afraid of them, they will hector and domineer finely, no, no, let them think you don't care whether they are pleased or no, and then they'll be as condescending and humble" (47). Fetnah's

acquired passion for liberty is unbalanced, and her virtue is then, at least, depicted as dubious. This implies that Fetnah will either become oppressed as she was initially, or given the possibility, become a tyrant, just like the Algerian men whom she disapproves of. The initial introduction of Fetnah resembling a “poor bird in a cage,” repeatedly “frightened,” and often “trembling” with fear, is subsequently replaced by descriptions of her loudness and visible masculinity (13, 15).

Despite their initial eagerness to follow the freed captives to the U.S., both Zoriana and Fetnah conveniently choose to stay in Algiers and comfort their fathers. Fetnah becomes determined to perform her “duty” as a daughter when her father Ben Hassan is forced to stay behind in Algiers to “learn humanity” (74). Zoriana also debates whether to “leave this place, and embrace Christianity” or accompany her poor father (32). Henry rationalizes Zoriana staying behind, stating that it would be “barbarous to impose on [Zoriana’s] generous nature” and to “take her from her country and friends” (31). It is ambiguous as to whether Zoriana and Fetnah became Christian at the close of the play. Their sacrifices are analogous to Olivia’s selflessness and Rebeca’s passion for freedom, suggesting that Zoriana’s and Fetnah’s exemplary actions legitimize them as Christians. Yet these two characters’ decision to stay with their fathers is not about their choices. It is about the familial and national connections that hinder potential interracial and interfaith marriage. In a play that dwells so much on the characters’ desire to become Christians, its ending reminds the limitations of intercultural interactions and interferes with their immigration. The play suggests that conversion is impossible, and that gatekeeping must be enforced to protect national integrity.

Slaves in Algiers serves as propaganda for white Christian America by solidifying the national and religious ties that present themselves in the form of freedom, benevolence, and virtue. The generous reformation of the other legitimizes the captives' freedom and provides the captives with safe return home, ensuring that no men and women under with Christian values are subordinated. The reverse captivity perspective allows the central characters to appropriate U.S. national ideals through dissociation with the slavish captors during captivity. In contrast to America as the embodiment of liberty and freedom, Algiers represents confinement and slavery in need of redemption furthering the dissociation between the two nations and religions. Religious otherness becomes entangled in confirmation of American identity by denying Christian captivity and reframing of the heathens as slavish and corrupt beings, driven by brutality and greed. While depicting the captivity of the Americans in this paradoxical nature, the discursive patterns in this play assure the audience that resistance to religious conversion preserves American values and hampers the immigration and assimilation of religious others as a threat to U.S. national integrity.

CHAPTER 2

RESISTANCE TO CONVERSION:

“BY UNITING WE STAND, BY DIVIDING WE FALL”

One of the first observations, the author of the following sheets made, upon his return to his native country, after an absence of seven years, was the extreme avidity, with which books of mere amusement were purchased and perused by all ranks of countrymen.³⁹

This is the opening to the preface of Royall Tyler’s novel, *The Algerine Captive; or the Life and Adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill, Six Years a Prisoner among the Algerines*.⁴⁰ Tyler’s protagonist and the first person narrator Updike Underhill is a gullible hero, whose adventures and misfortunes as a naive New Englander reflect changes in the new nation. Updike’s observations of change in the “public taste” of the United States is not a sudden realization occurring after a long absence from his “native” country (5). Rather, Tyler’s fictional Barbary captivity narrative is an extensive commentary of gradual changes in Updike’s country. To Updike’s surprise, books are now “designed to amuse rather than instruct,” yet in a more problematic tone, he declares that they are not “manufacture[d]” at home and thus expose the vulnerable youth of the nation, especially its daughters, to “levity and vices of the parent country” (6). More broadly, booksellers busily fostering “the new born taste of the people” suggest increased citizen participation in reading during the vibrant

³⁹ *The Algerine Captive*, Preface, page 5.

⁴⁰ First published in 1797.

period of nation building. These observations are not exclusive to literary trends. Updike's retrospective narrative reveals unstable social formations in the newly independent nation, and his experiences in captivity restore his American national identity and sense of belonging he lacked previously. A distant observer of social inconsistencies before his own enslavement, Updike embraces his country's virtues after his ambivalent experiences in bondage. The narrative highlights the social and political hypocrisies of the nation's ideals of liberty; namely, a commitment to equality yet an acceptance of slavery.

The first volume of *The Algerine Captive* is Updike's satirical account of U.S. social life as he travels in search of a living. The son of a farmer, Updike Underhill departs his home and pursues an education in Latin and Greek. His classical education, however, is far from practical. He works as a school master expecting his young scholars to be "seated in awful silence" around him and to respect his authority (30). Yet he finds out that schools are chaotic nurseries and opts for practicing medicine, which also proves difficult as he competes with many charlatans. Eventually, penniless and without a prospect for success as a physician in the mainland, he accepts a position as a doctor on a slave ship and claims to involuntarily enter the slave trade. While on the ship, Updike is horrified by the cruel treatment of slaves and intervenes, demanding improvements to their conditions. However, his medical advice is dismissed on the assumption that he is "moved by some *yankee nonsense about humanity*" (99).⁴¹ As Updike contemplates the barbarous effects of slavery on the ship, he himself becomes enslaved by the

⁴¹ All italicized emphasis belongs to the novel.

Algerine captain, Hamed Hali Saad, who is “glittering in silks, pearl, and gold, [sitting] crossed leg upon a velvet cushion” (105). Once a freeman, Updike is held captive for six years in Algiers. This dramatic plot change shifts the humorous tone of the first volume; in the U.S., Updike is a self-absorbed and preoccupied transgressor, while in Algiers, he is an observant interpreter.

In many ways, Updike’s narrative, and Rowson’s play as I have argued, triumphs freedom of soul during slavery with a rhetoric of reverse captivity perspective by illuminating captors’ own moral enslavement. It is no surprise then, that Cathy Davidson resolves that captivity “sets [Updike] free” from his earlier critique of the “barbaric” Americans (194). Although Davidson subsequently acknowledges that there are “more similarities between Tyler’s Algiers and America,” both filled with greed and superstition, she also suggests that despite the “setbacks” of American democracy, “oligarchy, suppression of dissent, and slavery” is more pronounced in Algiers than it is in the U.S. (194). Davidson further argues that Tyler ends the novel by returning “back to the republican values of individual responsibility, individual conscience, and individual action within and for the good of the commonwealth” (109, 110). However, this argument is questionable. The novel discloses inconsistencies in the democratic system as a collective failure of individual consciousness and responsibility, which hardly proves Davidson’s argument. In an article⁴² that discusses Tyler’s critique of deliberative systems as “political fantasy,” Elizabeth Fenton argues that distrust of “deliberation, about citizens’ abilities to form and enact rational preferences, is a driving force” in the novel (72). According to

⁴² “Indeliberate Democracy: The Politics of Religious Conversion in Royall Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive*,” published by *Early American Literature*.

Fenton's analysis, the novel suggests that equally productive participation of civil society is "an impediment rather than a path to an appropriate action" (74).

Tyler's *Algerine Captive* invites an ambivalent approach to the role of individual agency in a collective system. The preface suggests that public taste is an artifact of emerging trends taking a playfully entertaining stance toward the relationship between fact and fiction. Updike's friend calls for the new nation to "write our own books of amusement" and that these books should "exhibit our own manners" (7):

"Why then do you not write the history of your own life? The first part of it, if not highly interesting, would at least display a portrait of New England manners, hitherto unattempted. Your captivity among the Algerines, with some notices of the manners of that ferocious race, so dreaded by commercial powers, and so little known in our country, would be interesting, and I feel no advantage the Novel writer can have over you, unless your readers should be of the sentiment of the young lady, mentioned by Addison in his Spectator.

(7)⁴³

The young lady in question, Updike informs, "threw aside," what she assumes to be a "Novel" with "disgust" when she is told that "the work was founded on FACT" (7).

Both volumes of Updike's narrative are interesting and informative. Yet, a mixture of conflicting observations and unreliable perspectives make it hard to disentangle fact

⁴³ An endnote of the Modern Library Classics edition discloses the full quote of this interesting exchange: "A lady of my acquaintance told me one day, in great joy, that she had got a parcel of the most delightful *novels* to read, that she never met before. They call them Plutarch's Lives, said she.—I happened, unfortunately, to inform her ladyship, that they were deemed to be *authentic histories*.—Upon which her countenance fell, and she never read another line them" (229).

from fiction. The novel pokes fun at fundamental questions regarding the nature of Updike's work, such as: What role of fiction is Updike surprised to see emerge? Where does the capitalized "FACT" stand in relation to fiction (7)? Is his narrative a criticism of the judgment-based influence on readers or a guidance of morality and ethics? Or is his narrative intended to allow readers to intertwine the facts and fictions of this highly humorous and provocative narrative? Updike's ambivalent stance toward fact and fiction translates directly to his oscillating attitudes about who the enslaved and free is.

Prophecy, Dreams, and the Learned Reader

In *Disowning Slavery*, Joanne Pope Melish states that Algerians were "characterized as 'savage,' 'lawless,' and 'tawny'— language quite similar to that used to describe the native peoples of North America" (154). The comparison of indigenous people and Algerians in Updike's mother's dream is similar to the resemblances that historical narratives make about the indigenous people of North America and the people of Algiers. Although written more than two hundred years earlier, Tyler's fictional captivity narrative is reminiscent of the captivity of Mary Rowlandson.⁴⁴ Rowlandson's narrative reflects the trials of a determined Christian who resists the potential threats of assimilation into indigenous culture, revealing anxieties about religious conversion. Andrea Tinnemeyer argues that Rowlandson's narrative is "less her own story than a moral lesson, less a personal narrative than a

⁴⁴ Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, published in 1682, whose consumed energy during captivity has been fueled through the Bible for the fifteen-week period she is held captive by Narragansett Indians.

paradigmatic genre for articulating an Anglo-European, and later Anglo-American, identity in the ‘New World’” (xii). As a model, then, Rowlandson’s narrative is about instructing moral guidance and defining national identities; similar patterns repeat in Tyler’s fiction. For example, similar to how Rowlandson adapts and survives, Updike learns and applies cultural practices more successfully than many locals. Yet, while Rowlandson’s account of captivity confirms the dichotomies between the savage captor and noble captive, Tyler’s first-person narrative disrupts this divide by negotiating between these groups and by being ambivalent about the cultural hierarchy. Nevertheless, even as Updike successfully navigates the boundaries of captivity, he holds firmly onto his religious beliefs and freedoms that define his Americanness. Although Updike learns from his experience as a slave, he is not eager to negotiate his fundamental, nationalistic values.

Algerine Captive presents slavery as a moral affliction that indeterminately affects Updike’s skewed realities as well as his fellow Americans and their cultural and religious counterparts. Timothy Marr states that Americans employed impressions of relatively humane Muslim slavery to highlight the inhumane nature of American practices. Additionally, Marr suggests that American orientalism featured Islam “as the epitome of soul-starving bondage,” and in concrete ways, used the “stereotypes of antichristianity and despotism of Islam to infidelize unwanted American behaviors” (183). As readers follow Updike’s interactions in many different cultural and geographical settings, the term “savage” is interchangeably used to refer to many groups, ranging from Updike’s ancestors, indigenous people, his students, his captors, and Jews in Algiers.

Updike opens his narrative by establishing his lineage to his ancestor, Captain John Underhill, “one of the first emigrants to New England” (11). Updike’s “honoured” ancestor’s “ardent love of liberty, civil and religious” is tested when Captain John Underhill is found guilty for “carnally looking to luste” after a mistress during a lecture in Boston (17). In other words, he is persecuted for looking at a woman. Although there are no written laws that address his crime, Captain John Underhill is assured that officials have it written on their minds and have been meaning to write it down on paper. Updike Underhill exposes the hypocrisy of law and the injustice done to Captain Underhill by the forefathers as he reveals his ancestor’s story to save his legacy. In addition, Updike ironically excuses the injustice that was done against his ancestor:

Whoever reflects upon the piety of our forefathers, the noble unrestrained ardour, with which they resisted oppression in England, relinquished the delights of their native country, crossed a boisterous ocean, penetrated a savage wilderness, encountered famine, pestilence, and Indian warfare, transmitted to us their sentiments of independence, that love of liberty, which under God enabled us to obtain our own glorious freedom, will readily pass over those dark few spots of zeal, which clouded their rising sun. (19)

The many hardships endured by the settlers hardly pardon Puritans’ misjudgment during Captain John Underhill’s trial. In fact, these experiences are reminiscent of the “dark” moments caused by the zealous piety. Early settlers left “their native country” to impose on others’ lands; famine and diseases created a conflict over lack of resources, and the quest for “glorious freedom” cost indigenous people their

independence. Updike is proud of his ancestor for killing “one hundred and fifty Indians on Long Island, and upwards of three hundred on the Main” (20, 21).

Relative to Updike’s own experience, his lineage proves itself to be a practice of a rigid and violent form of liberty. Religious and political dogmas inconsistently wipe the rights of dissenters and indigenous people.

A connection between ancestral confrontations with indigenous people and Updike's captivity in Algiers is made when Updike’s mother professes her son’s sufferings amongst the “savages,” after seeing Indians playing football with Updike's head in a dream:

This dream made a deep impression on my mother....She was sure Updike was born to be the sport of fortune, and that he would one day suffer among savages. Dear woman, she had the native Indians in her mind, but never apprehended her poor son’s suffering, many years as a slave, among barbarians, more cruel than the monsters of our own woods. (23)

His dream reflects Updike’s ancestral trajectory. In the foreseeable future, Updike will suffer amongst the “savages,” despite a promised fortune. His mother's predictions are accurate except that her son’s suffering will be at the hands of barbarians, who are comparatively more brutal than “the monsters” Updike’s ancestors encountered. Updike immediately refers to “the learned reader” whom he assumes will “smile contemptuously...in this enlightened age;” implying that understanding this dream without taking it lightly requires an open interpretation (23). In an italicized quote Updike declares to the reader that it “*was the error of the times of monkish ignorance, to believe everything. It may possibly be the error of*

the present day, to credit nothing” (23). After conveying religious examples from Christianity and Judaism to persuade the reader to see the significance of prophecies, Updike resolves to convey only facts and let the reader decide whether or not to believe them. The narrator's decision to leave it to the “learned reader” maintains the ambivalence of the narrative and ridicules the absolutist approaches and “monkish ignorance” of the past and the dismissiveness of the present. Updike’s account of his education exemplifies the critique of absolutism of the past. Updike’s father is advised that dead languages are more estimable than living languages, and, accordingly, his son gulps down “daily portions of Greek” (26). However, compared to his family’s humble and productive farm life, Updike’s classical education inhibits his ability to efficiently converse, as he constantly misreads ordinary language. Updike’s father was blinded to the reality of learning Greek misguided by the men of knowledge, as a result of which Updike’s education traps him in the world of fiction unable to interpret facts. As a learned man, he is an outlier, ridiculed for his obsession over dead languages and his romanticized interpretation of the nostalgic past.

Slavery: “good black soul into a white body”

Updike’s journey from his home, which includes a global detour to Algiers, comes full circle with his redemption from slavery. Ironically, while he is deemed an outcast in America, he becomes an advocate of abolishment in captivity. Despite the language barrier he encounters on the ship and in Algiers, he bonds with the slaves over common humanity and gains their trust. The slaves on the ship pray for Updike because of his kindness and wonder why their God has “put [his] good *black* soul

into a *white* body” (101). Here, “good *black* soul” is a counter argument against the advocates of African slavery with the false claims to inferiority of “*black* soul.” The animosity of whitemen is associated with their soul which is trapped in their “*white* body.” After Updike becomes enslaved, one of his freed African companions offers Updike food and sheds tears for the fate of his former protector. Touched by this man’s generous and selfless act towards one of the “barbarous” men, as he calls himself, Updike bursts out:

Grant me, I ejaculated, once more to taste the freedom of my native country, and every moment of my life shall be dedicated to preaching against this detestable commerce. I will fly to our fellow citizens in the southern states; I will, on my knees, conjure them in the name of humanity, to abolish a traffic [*sic*], which causes to bleed in every pore. If they are deaf to the pleadings of nature, I will conjure them, for the sake of consistency, to cease to deprive their fellow creatures of freedom, which their writers, their orators, representatives, senators, and even their constitutions of government, have declared to be the unalienable birth right of men. (106)

Updike first witnesses the horrors of slavery during transit in the ship. It is only after his own enslavement that he promises to dedicate his life to preaching against the “slave commerce” in his “native” country, which he offers as a selfless commitment to “the grateful African” (106). Updike is determined to dispute slavery “for the sake of consistency,” referring to the premise of constitutional equality in the U.S., conditional on being a free man in his country once again. Updike, here, does not directly refer to slavery, but

addresses the slave trade of the southern states. He distinguishes himself from the southern tradition by referring to the southern states as “them.” Updike is oblivious to systematic hypocrisy and fails to acknowledge the slave trade as a national problem. He acknowledges national relations with a distant tone of “their writers” and “their orators,” instead of a more unifying choice of “our.” Once Updike receives his freedom, he returns to his country as a patriot and forgets about his promise.

While the American slave trade is depicted as a cruel and abominable practice,⁴⁵ slavery in Algiers is described to be contemptuous and dishonorable though with less violence. Updike cautions fellow citizens of his independent nation about the cruelty he faced when attempting to escape slavery. Updike is slower than the other slaves working for his master in Algiers, so the slave overseer first threatens and then whips Updike:

This was the first disgraceful blow I had ever received. Judge you, my gallant, freeborn fellow citizens, you, who rejoice daily in our federal strength and independence, what were my sensations. I threw down my spade with disdain, and retired from my work, lowering indignation upon my insulting oppressor. Upon his lifting his whip to strike me again, I flew at him, collared him, and threw him on his back. Then, setting my foot on his breast, I called upon my fellow slaves to assist me to bind the wretch, and to make one glorious effort for our freedom. But I called in vain. (123)

⁴⁵ Paul Baepler states that “the Barbary captivity narratives might seem to mirror a slave narrative,” but the conditions of Black slaves were harsher in comparison (28-29). *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives*.

Although he was unaware of his earlier slavish dependency on his bookish fancies, Updike's literal enslavement awakens his spirit of freedom, and he responds to this unjust attack by rebelling against his "oppressor." Feeling insulted and annoyed, Updike stops working, and, threatened by another whipping, throws the overseer on the ground and steps on his chest. Updike then calls on the other slaves to join in his triumphant victory, only to realize that he has no control over his circumstances as a slave. While his observations of the slavery in the slaveship is passive, his reactions to slavery in Algiers is one of rebellion and an eager attempt to slave revolution.

Schueller addresses Updike's transformation after slavery: "In part 1, the narrator is bumbling comic hero searching for himself in a new country, while in part 2, despite being a captive, he is a wise reporter acting as the agent of the new empire" (50).⁴⁶ Cathy Davidson also points to Updike's transformation: "under the harshest conditions, [Updike] meets the oppressed of different races, nations, and religions, and, a captive himself, he discovers, for the first time in his life, a sense of community" (208). Updike writes in his final lines that he is a "worthy FEDERAL citizen" which Davidson interprets as being "open-minded, pluralistic, democratic, and utterly opposed to oligarchy or autocracy, and to one's dominating over another" (209). However, a limitation of Davidson's interpretation is that Updike's self-proclaimed version of a citizen, in the end, is one who can utterly stay true to their national identities regardless of the contradictions between principle and practice.

⁴⁶ Schuller uses nation and empire to be related terms in this context arguing that "nation was constructed as an empire" in Orientalists works (8). See *U.S. Orientalisms* for more comprehensive discussion.

Updike's experience awakens him with a sense of national belonging that he was unaware existed before. Even if the idea of abolishment is appealing, Updike's experiences further strengthen his commitment to his "native" country. Through his experience of slavery, Updike recognizes freedom to be a definitive principle of nationhood. Similar to the ending of Rowson's play, the return home with an untainted faith and without succumbing to slavery maintains a strong attachment to the ideals of government and instills a national unit. Heightened by newly acquired knowledge in the "schools of despotism," Updike's closing remarks refer to his unwavering loyalty to his country (225). More than ever in his life, Updike's experiences in slavery inspire his view of a homogenous and strong America: "[T]o no nation besides the United States can that ancient saying be more emphatically applied; BY UNITING WE STAND, BY DIVIDING WE FALL" (226). Updike unearths the realities of his nation during slavery yet turns a blind eye to inconsistent principles of freedom in order to embrace his own citizenship.

"My body is in slavery, but my spirit is free."

Updike becomes an informant on the lifestyles and customs of Algerians, thus his narrative at times reads as an orientalist ethnography. Updike's long residence in Algiers and his close interactions with Algerians strengthens his credibility. His overly engaged religious observations and authentic perspective, which Updike claims is more accurate than travel narratives, frames Algiers as a frontier to be explored. Although Updike is more open-minded and receptive to Algerian culture than his fellow citizens, he, nevertheless, voices stereotypes about Islam. For example,

referring to their strict faith, Updike assumes Muslims would believe “the earth was flat if the alcoran said so” (149). Updike is also quick to criticize religious dogma: “Mahomet has been indignantly vilified by his opponents, and as ardently praised by his adherents” (176). Here, he criticizes both followers and nonbelievers of the Islamic faith for believing or dismissing Mahomet without question. Updike is tolerant in his understanding of each perspective. However, Updike ultimately resolves to be “an ardent supporter” of his country despite the novel’s critique of absolutism.

An English convert invites Updike to converse with Mollah, “or Mahometan priest” in order to renounce his Christian faith, accept Islam, and become a free man. Appalled by this offer, Updike narrates:

I had ever viewed the character of an apostate as odious and detestable. I turned from him with abhorrence, and for once embraced my burthen with pleasure. Indeed I pity you, replied I, the tears standing in my eyes. My body is in slavery, but my spirit is free. Your body is at liberty, but your soul is in the most abject slavery, in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. You have sold your God of filthy lucre; and “what shall it profit you, if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul, or what a man give in exchange for his soul.” (126)

Updike views apostasy as enslavement of the soul and the ultimate betrayal. He takes religion to be a form of capital. After Updike’s outraged response, however, he agrees to take a break from hard labor and satiate his “curiosity to hear what could be said in favour of so detestable a system, as the Mahometan imposture” (126-127). Updike’s

introduction to Islamic promises also solidifies his faith with “rational preferences, and not merely on [his] ignorance of any other religious system” (127).

Although Mollah makes convincing remarks during the debate, Updike refuses to become a Muslim and congratulates himself for holding onto his Christian faith. Anxious that Mollah will attempt “to destroy [his] faith,” Updike narrates (135):

“My blood boiled to hear this infidel vaunt himself thus triumphantly against my faith; and if it had not been for a prudence, which in hours of zeal I have since had cause to lament, I should have taken vengeance of him upon the spot. I restrained my anger, and observed, our religion is supported by miracles.” (133)

Mollah, reasonably, refutes Updike’s counter points. However, unlike Mollah, who is calm and confident, Updike is enraged to the point where he almost attacks Mollah. Tyler was criticized for favoring Islam because Updike fails to defend Christianity from claims made by “Mollah or [the] Mahometan priest;”⁴⁷ Updike persistently maintains his religious identity (126). In the American slave ship “Sympathy,” African slaves⁴⁸ also resist religious conversion, viewing conversion as a matter of life and death:

⁴⁷ Caleb Crain in the introduction of the Modern Library Classics edition acknowledges that Tyler is not unique in taking advantage of “readers’ sudden interest in Islam and North African culture, but it is the most imaginative, and it is unusually open-minded in its perspective” (XXI). See also Cathy Davidson on accusation of Tyler favoring Islam and his response.

⁴⁸ According to Cathy Davidson, the description of the inhumane practices in the slave ship is “borrowed largely from slave narratives and most obviously from the account by Olaudah Equiano, first published in London in 1789 and reprinted in New York in 1791” (206).

These injured Africans, preferring [sic] death to slavery, or perhaps buoyed above the fear of dissolution, by their religion, which taught them to look with an eye of faith to a country beyond the grave; where they should again meet those friends and relatives, from whose endearments they had been torn, and where no fiend should torment, or christian thirst for gold, had, wanting other means, resolved to starve themselves, and every eye lowered to the fixed resolve of this deadly intent. (98)

Updike interprets the slaves' religion to be directly related to their love of country. Furthermore, he believes that because the slaves stay true to their beliefs, they will reunite with their friends and families in the afterlife. The slaves' strong connection to religion cannot be interrupted by slaveholders.

Updike's narrative does not depend heavily on the hierarchical positioning of different religions. Updike is able to sympathize with slaves in the United States, listen to religious viewpoints despite his prejudices, and confirm some stereotypes while rejecting others. Yet together, these actions contribute to Updike's ambivalence toward religious freedom. Updike transforms into a resolute, ideal citizen committed to his country after his enslavement, leaving the reader to ponder the inconsistencies between reason, independence, democracy, and religion. In the end, like Rowson's heroic characters, Tyler's protagonist resists religious assimilation.

CHAPTER 3

CONFLICT RESOLVED:

“THE WHITE MAN COMETH—THE INDIAN VANISHETH”

Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie or, Early Times in the Massachusetts* was first published in 1827. Set in seventeenth-century colonial America, this early historical romance explores the theme of authority, independence, individual action, and choice in the aftermath of the 1637 genocidal war of the Puritans against the Pequots.⁴⁹ Sedgwick includes many prominent historical figures as characters in her fiction, such as John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and Mononotto, the Pequot chief. In the novel’s preface, Sedgwick claims that the historical characters and events were “convenient in the execution of the author’s design” of illustrating “not the history, but the characters of times” (3). Even though Sedgwick does not intend her narrative to be a “substitute for genuine history,” it reads as a revisionist narrative of early Puritan settlements (4).

In *Captivity and Sentiment*, Michelle Burnham states that the “critique of an antiquated Puritan intolerance” is characteristic of American historical romance that generally results in victory over intolerance as an “example of progressive history” (104). Sedgwick’s novel fits well with Burnham’s analysis, as it is intentionally preoccupied with recreating a history that is rooted in republican ideals

⁴⁹ See Karen Ordahl Kupperman’s book chapter “Resisting the Other” in her *Indians and English: Facing off in Early America* (228-232).

of liberty. It cultivates a past that, as noted in the Penguin edition, “[converts] readers to a tolerant and heartfelt Christianity.”⁵⁰ Racial tolerance and its romanticization in the novel hinges on reimaginings of historical moments of the colonial past. Jeffrey Insko, in an article titled “Anachronistic Imaginings of *Hope Leslie*’s Challenge to Historicism,” suggests that the novel’s anachronistic imaginings invite “a kind of cross-temporal community, a simultaneity among historical periods” (190).⁵¹ Borrowing from his discussions of simultaneity, I argue that at the crossroads of history and fiction, the novel rebuilds a republic futurity that responds to nineteenth-century approaches to the “Indian problem”⁵² and westward expansion.

In Sedgwick’s novel, disguise and discussions of autonomy are mechanisms used to erase indigenous identity during a relatively tolerant seventeenth-century colonial setting. While the novel courts the idea of racial equality with an illusion of respective coexistence in the characters’ fight against injustice, it obliterates racial conflict by allowing indigenous people to choose their fate. This is an illusion, however, because the fate of the indigenous people was already sealed by the settlers. Interactions between young protagonists, who have a mutual understanding and respect for cultural and religious differences, solidify racial distinctions between the settlers and the Pequots. Establishing this dual difference reiterates the settler’s notion of being a savior: the “noble savage” requires liberation from captivity. By pursuing

⁵⁰ From the introduction of the Penguin Classics edition of 1998 by Carolyn L. Karcher. Page X.

⁵¹ Insko argues “that history is not either a unique and distinct past or our present-day reconstructions of it, but a negotiation, a contact zone, an imagined experience born of the interactions between the two.” Therefore, unlike the historicist opposition between “historical- and present-mindedness,” he suggests an alternative interpretation of *Hope Leslie* as depicting “both past and present” (193, 194).

⁵² For scholarship on the so-called “Indian problem,” see Lucy Maddox’s *Removals* for elaborate references on American literature, Stuart Banner’s *How the Indians Lost Their Land* for discussions on treaties and land removals, and Jean M. O’Brien’s *Firsting and Lasting* for historical readings of the myth of the Indian extinction.

this type of liberation, the settlers are freed from the burdens of colonial religious intolerance. While the display of disguise and autonomy is a combative device against racial and religious aggression in the novel, it also promotes a passive indigenous identity whereby the indigenous people require advocates. In other words, what might seem like an alternative way in which the Pequots obtain their freedom, becomes, rather, a device used to validate elimination of indigenous people and to fulfill a vision of the future settler generation. The novel illuminates the ongoing racial divides of Jacksonian America within an axis of racial tolerance that liberates dogmatic religious practices through triumphal individual judgment driven by mediation between Christian tolerance and legitimate authority of liberty.

Unlike the historical leaders, the masterminds in Sedgwick's historical adaptation are a new generation of young and driven characters: Mononotto's daughter, Magawisca, respected Puritan William Fletcher's son, Everell Fletcher, and the daughter of Mr. Fletcher's much-admired yet forbidden love, Hope Leslie. The novel focuses on how these characters overcome racial and religious prejudice concerning rigid Puritan beliefs of early settlement, as well as constant speculations of threat from the Pequots. Yet, the novel opens in England with a critique of unchecked submission and loyalty of the citizens, setting the tone for its subsequent polemical decisions. Mr. Fletcher is dramatically torn from his childhood love and cousin, Alice, by his loyalist uncle, Sir William, who despises that "lads' heads are crammed with philosophy and rhetoric and history of those liberty loving Greeks and Romans" (6). After this cruel separation, which occurs due to Mr. Fletcher's zealous "acquaintance with the puritans," Mr. Fletcher marries an orphan girl, Martha (6). Then, in 1630, he

joins John Winthrop on the iconic ship *Arabella* and successfully settles in New England, seeking the life his uncle once scorned.

A little over a decade later, Mr. Fletcher's cousin Alice, whose father and husband passed away, journeys to the New World with her two daughters and their tutor, Mr. Craddock, as well as her sister-in-law Mrs. Grafton. Too weak to bear the journey, however, Alice dies, leaving the elder daughter Alice Leslie, renamed Hope, and Mary Leslie, renamed Faith, under the guardianship of Mr. Fletcher. Soon after receiving the news of his deceased love, Mr. Fletcher once again suffers hardship when his wife and children, except his son Everell, are slaughtered in an attack. The attack was organized by Mononotto to save his children, Oneco and Magawisca, who at the time both worked as servants for the Fletcher family at the request of Governor Winthrop. During the attack, Faith Leslie and Everell Fletcher are taken captive. Though Everell is freed thanks to Magawisca, Faith is held captive by the Pequots. In the end, the novel circles back to the concept of forbidden lovers, as Everell and Hope marry "as if instinct with their parents' feelings, mingled in natural reunion" (159).

The novel's cultural importance has been recognized as a reimagining of the colonial era, as it celebrates the relationship between colonists and indigenous inhabitants. David Watson, for instance, points to "the rhetoric of sympathy" through which, he argues, Sedgwick frames the "American Indian...as the missing, yet not fully absent, element in a history stretching from the Puritan colonies to Jacksonian America" (6, 20). In addition to the critical conversation about the "stretching" of history, Sedgwick's preoccupation with subversive gender roles, what Amanda Emerson calls a "creative refutation of Federalist circumlocutions of equality," has

also been discussed at length (25).⁵³ Although Emerson acknowledges Magawisca's portrayal as a "noble savage figure," she positions the Pequot princess as indistinguishable from her white counterparts to exemplify "the multiplicity of women" that, she argues, Sedgwick depicts to represent the "equality premised on the individuality of women" (28, 29, 32). Per Lucy Maddox, however, unlike the white women of the novel, the social transformation of the Pequots is "only cosmetic" (110).⁵⁴ Maddox compellingly argues that Sedgwick's "portraits of Indians only confirm the Puritan idea that there is such a thing as an Indian nature that has destined all Indians to inferiority and exclusion" (111).⁵⁵ This type of exclusion depicted in the novel, however, I argue, is not imposed on the Indians under the guise of "inferiority," but rather is framed as a voluntary seclusion of indigeneity, enacted through a democratic celebration of racial and religious equality. The novel guides the trajectory of a well-grounded democracy by reformulating relationships between settlers and indigenous people through a resolution of seemingly voluntary seclusion.

⁵³ Emerson states that Sedgwick responded to "what increasingly becomes an untenable contradiction for many middle-class white women: their self-identification with a nation that proclaims equality as a founding truth while at the same time subordinating women" (25).

⁵⁴ Maddox draws many parallels to Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* and Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*, and this claim is made in regards to both texts. The representative survey of literary texts she analyzes are argued to be "bound by the ideological and discursive limits imposed by the rhetoric of the civilization-or-extinction argument" in regards to "the Indian question" (11). See *Removals: Nineteenth-Century American Literature and the Politics of Indian Affairs*.

⁵⁵ Maddox points out to American women's freedom to "determine their own futures" against "white patriarchal oppression" and argues that continued Indian "resistance makes no sense now that the culture has become enlightened through its feminization" (110). Therefore, she argues, Sedgwick confirms the common notion of predestined Indian extinction.

Mechanical Existence/Automaton

In *The Virtues of Liberalism*, historian James T. Kloppenberg shows that American national independence is important for Americans because it secures “autonomy as individuals.”⁵⁶ In my analysis, I view autonomy as an agency, a form of facilitating equal participation in the national discourse. In Sedgwick’s novel, autonomy, or the lack thereof, and eagerness to revolutionize their colonial past, propels the white characters’ quest for independence. Their active participation emphasizes the importance of moral judgment and individual choice, both of which are foundational to liberal values. The following exchange, during which Everall hopelessly attempts to persuade Esther Downing, Winthrop’s niece, to collaborate in his scheme to release Magawisca from prison, exemplifies the motivations of the puritanical Esther and Everell, that form the basis for rightful defiance:

“Scripture warrant!” exclaimed Everell with surprise and vexation he could not conceal. “Are you to do no act of mercy, or compassion, or justice, for which you cannot quote a text from scripture?”

“Scripture hath abundant texts to authorise all mercy, compassion, and justice, but we are not always the allowed judges of their application; and in the case before us we have an express rule, to which, if we submit, we cannot err;...we are commanded in the first of Peter, 2d chapter, to ‘submit ourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as

⁵⁶ James T. Kloppenberg lists autonomy and popular sovereignty as the virtues of republicanism that points out a contradictory nature of equality. He interprets the meaning of autonomy as “balancing the radical ideas of freedom and equality with the demands of duty” and the meaning of popular sovereignty as “the commitment to representative government as a form uniquely attractive because of its openness,” which also implies that “the ultimate decision-making authority for the nation” is reserved for the people (30,35).

supreme; or into governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers...”

“But surely, Esther, there must be a warrant, as you call it, for sometimes resisting legitimate authority, or all our friends in England would not be at open war with their king. With such a precedent, I should think the sternest conscience would permit you to obey the generous impulses of nature, rather than to render this slavish obedience to the letter of the law.” (292)

Esther insists on obtaining a “scripture warrant” to interfere between the prisoner Magawisca and the magistrates. But for Everell, “the letter of the law” becomes an act of “slavish obedience” without autonomy (292). Everell’s frustration stems from Esther’s inability to engage the personal pronoun “you” as well as her refusal to execute what is argued to be a reinstatement of justice. Esther registers Everell’s remonstrations as a challenge that clouds her judgment of unquestionable submission to the “ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake.” With an irreconcilable position, she protests: “Oh, Everell! do not seek to blind my judgment” (292). Esther’s unclouded “judgment” aligns with the “authorised” interpretation of the scripture. In addition to critiquing female submission—suggestively, Everell could be an executive future leader—this passage also critiques the religious doctrine that yields deference to hierarchical authority. When Everell questions whether Esther’s decision to be uninvolved can be wavered by “mercy, or compassion, or justice,” Esther responds that they are amply present in the scripture. The problem Everell and Esther face here is not about how religion may be ill-equipped to deal with what Everell seeks, but, according to Esther, they are limited in the execution of these cases. The implication is

that absolutist power, although in the form of “man,” confines not only women, but all people. As Everell makes the case that “legitimate authority” should be opposed, he labels conscience-driven decisions as “obedience,” a form of entrapment that goes against “the generous impulses of nature.” In contrast, Esther’s list of supreme powers scales the king and the governors with equal weight, thereby confirming the potential of unquestioned authority leading to dangerous tyranny.

Likewise, when the eponymous heroine, Hope Leslie, questions her own defiant nature, her strongest confidant, Digby, assures her that everybody likes “having [their] own way” and that “is the privilege we came to this wilderness world for...though the gentles up in town there, with the Governor at their head, hold a pretty tight rein, yet ‘that he came not away from the Lords-bishops, to put himself under the Lord’s-brethren’” (235). Reminding Hope that in the New World they now “only kneel to Him,” Digby’s comments refer to a behind-the-scenes orchestration of an omnipotent godlike figure, Governor Winthrop. Digby continues with a “prating tongue,” as he calls: “Times are changed—there is a new spirit in the world—chains are broken—fetters are knocked off—and the liberty set forth in the blessed word, is now felt to be every man’s birth-right” (236). Digby’s statement about changed times repeats Everell’s criticism of unchecked authority. Here, Digby affirms that autonomous engagement is the “birth-right” of every settler in the “wilderness,” regardless of their gender. Furthermore, his allusion to broken chains contrasts his description of the Governor’s “tight rein.” Digby alludes to Protestant dissenters disembarking in Anglican England in pursuit of freedom.

The discussion of the above passages brings to mind America's historical touchstone, The Declaration of Independence (US 1776) and its undeniable assurance that "men are by nature equally free and independent." Nicholas Guyatt discusses the inconsistency of this claim and how, in the early republic, white liberals who knew the impracticality of racial equality opted for racial separation, which they framed as "separate but equal" (10). In Guyatt's argument, he states that to "convert slaves [and Native Americans] into citizens at a stroke" would lead to a "multiracial society dedicated to equal rights and potential" that had no precedent in the modern world (3, 9). Sedgwick's novel draws on similar anxieties and establishes racial equality based on inevitable racial separation. While the Pequots literally and figuratively rely on white autonomy to free themselves from settler intolerance, the young liberators defy authority to protect the liberties of the indigenous characters in appreciation of racial and religious differences. Yet, these differences are the fundamental distinction between the two groups and make coexistence virtually impossible.

As a communitarian spirit, the novel creates a collective futurity that includes not just women, but "young conspirators", who together catalyze the reclamation of national values that are deeply rooted in an unjust past (362). Hope Leslie propels the future of the colonies with her like-minded, individually-driven fellow generation who have a "natural frankness of temper... inclinations of heart, severe conscience... [and an] edifying modesty" (360, 364). The rebellious spirit and bold maneuvers of the younger generation allow for a successful restoration of fairness within a "stern justice" system (125). The idea of the automaton, also often described with such words as "mechanical," "machine-like," and "automatical" in the novel, contrasts with the

concept of independence that is inherent to autonomy. Hope, for instance, repeatedly declares her resistance to the “authority” and refuses to be a “machine” to others simply because they are older than her (189). In addition, she often protests against social hierarchy and has the power to influence the older generation that oversees politics. There are many moments of life-saving in the narrative: namely, Magawisca saves Everell, Everell and Hope save Magawisca, Hope saves Nelema, and Nelema saves Craddock. While Hope and Everell are empowered to the extent that they become puppeteers of the formidable Puritan settlement, the Pequots are limited to save white characters only, and cannot liberate themselves.

In contrast to Hope and Everell, the wise Magawisca is proud by nature, which prevents her from obtaining her own freedom. Instead, the young white protagonists bring her justice. During Magawisca’s trial, Everell encourages Magawisca to claim she is stranger to settler “laws and usages, and demand some one to speak for [her]” (302). While Everell implies that as a “stranger,” Magawisca can “demand” representation and possibly be found innocent, Magawisca holds a firm position and rejects such representation. Although Magawisca silently acknowledges Everell’s recommendation, she addresses the magistrates: “I am your prisoner and ye may slay me, but I deny your right to judge me. My people have never passed under your yoke—not one of my race has ever acknowledged your authority” (302). Magawisca, here, declares her nation's sovereignty and refuses to be judged by an “authority” that her race has never acknowledged. This absolutist rejection, however, leaves Magawisca without the option of defending herself or her tribe, as she considers herself a prisoner and demands “death or liberty” (309). This scene

foreshadows the ending of the novel, where Magawisca is asked to stay under protection or disappear into the “wilderness.”

Unlike the young characters who question expectations of obedience and challenge the unconditional submissiveness of Puritans, Magawisca is unmovable in her commitment to her principles. In fact, one of the defining qualities of Magawisca is loyalty to her father and tribe. Magawisca disobeys her father only to save Everell’s life during a heroic, Pocahontas-like⁵⁷ sacrifice that came at the expense of her arm. While Everell disapproves of Esther’s religious devotion, he admires Magawisca’s “noble mind” that is filled with the love of the Great Spirit. Magawisca is so “disposed to religious impressions and affections” that Hope wishes her to “enjoy the brighter light of Christian revelation” (351, 352). One of the magistrates at Magawisca’s trial holds up a Bible and confronts Magawisca; “this book contains the only revelation of a future world—the only rule for the present” (303). According to the magistrate’s claim, the written scripture contains the prophecy and dictates “the only rule.” However, Magawisca rejects this universality: “It contains thy rule, and it may be needful for your mixed race; but the Great Spirit hath written his laws on the hearts of his original children, and we need it not” (303). Magawisca’s position differs from the magistrate’s in that it acknowledges the differences of the rule and differentiates her people as followers of the Great Spirit who have written the laws in their hearts.

⁵⁷ Paul Baperler makes a connection between Captain John Smith’s earlier captivity by Tartars before reaching Virginia. He reminds Smith’s coat of arms that “displays the disembodied heads of three Turks he had slain, and it’s conceivable that Smith’s earlier Turkish captivity influenced his depiction of his capture by Powhatan and rescue by Pocahontas” (6). See *White Slaves, African Masters*.

Disguise

Hope Leslie entertains several moments of performative disguise that grant escape from situations of imprisonment, or at times, that offer entrance into Puritan society. Disguise in passing also is used as a form of passage between different racial groups and a mode of access in the way how the characters change their appearances. This section will analyze the many disguises employed in the novel, including Magawisca's escape from prison while disguised Hope's tutor Craddock, Oneco's saving of his wife Faith while disguised as a salesman, Catholic Sir Philip Gardiner's disguise as a devout Puritan, and Hope Leslie's disguise as a Catholic Saint. Some interrelated questions this section poses are: how much agency does disguise provide the subjects? To what extent do subjects need to alter their appearances? What are the limitations, and differences between, each racial groups' passability?

Magawisca often conceals her identity because she is known by many in the area and can be identified as a Pequot. In the following passage, the narrator describes Magawisca's disguised entrance into the city:

The appearance of an Indian woman in Boston excited no observation, the natives being in the habit of resorting the daily with game, fish, and their rude manufactures. Aware of the necessity of disguising every peculiarity, she unbound her hair from the braids in which it was usually confined, and combed it thick over her forehead, after the fashion of the aborigines in the vicinity of Boston whom Eliot describes as wearing this 'maiden veil.' She enveloped herself in a blanket that concealed the rich dress which it was her father's pride, (and perhaps her pleasure) that she should wear. Thus disguised, and

favoured' by the shadows of twilight, she presented herself at the Governor Winthrop's. (205)

Magawisca's disguise is described as a deliberate act of hiding any "peculiarity" to prove herself to be a trader of "rude manufacturers." Her "rich dress," which represents her father's pride, is a distinctive mark of her cultural heritage that contrasts the familiar image of "an Indian woman in Boston." The parenthetical information suggests that apart from her father's pride, or even perhaps because of it, she feels pleasure in wearing the dress. Yet she is "aware of" the need to conceal it. To blend into society, she carefully "envelops" herself with the blanket and presents herself at Governor Winthrop's. She takes pain to undo her braids but does so to imitate the hairstyle of "the aborigines" in Boston. Magawisca's hair, braided or unbraided, is described as trapped or trapping. Her regular braided hair is referred to as "confined," whereas during her disguise, her unbraided hair covers her forehead like a "veil" over her face. The natural light of the fading day happens to conceal any distinction, obscuring her real identity. In the most reductive form, Magawisca can be recognized broadly as one of the familiar indigenous women "in the vicinity." Only with this disguise can she gain access to her destination.

While Magawisca embodies an earthly image of an Indian woman "in the vicinity," Hope unintentionally "identifies herself with a catholic saint" (253). Unlike Magawasca's conscious efforts, Hope is "naturally" recognized as a saint:

[S]eeing Hope in an attitude of devotion, [Antonio] very naturally mistook her for a celestial visitant. In truth, she scarcely looked like a being of this earth: her hat and gloves were gone; her hair fell in

graceful disorder about her neck and shoulders, and her white dress and blue silk mantle had a saint-like simplicity. The agitating chances of the evening had scarcely left the hue of life on her cheek; and her deep sense of the presence and favour of heaven heightened her natural beauty with a touch of religious inspiration. (252)

Hope's unorganized image evokes a sense of purity and godliness such that at a first glance, Antonio, an Italian Catholic, mistakes her as a celestial visitor. The "graceful disorder" of Hope's hair, scattered over her shoulders, along with complexions of her "white dress and blue mantle" transform Hope from an earthly being to a heavenly creature. Hope is also able to communicate with Antonio in his native tongue and manipulates his misinterpretation to safely return home. The contrasting descriptions of Magawsica's and Hope's disguises are striking. In both cases, however, Magawsica and Hope transcend societal boundaries through disguise. Unlike Hope's natural, saint-like beauty, Magawisca's transformation requires concealing her embellished attire and braided hair. If Magawisca's hair, for instance, represents her tribe, once her braid is undone, she must redo her hair to avoid "observation." Although her disguise allows Magawisca to transcend cultures, therefore providing her mobility, it does so by obscuring and veiling her own culture. For Hope, on the other hand, her disguise emphasizes the "natural" look that provokes a "religious inspiration," allowing her to pass as a Catholic saint.

Unlike Hope's religious passing, the religious disguise of a Catholic is condoned in the novel. Sir Philip, believer of Catholicism and an ally to the colonies' political enemies, and Sir Philip's lover Rosa, disguised as his male page, named

Roslin, pass themselves as members of a Puritan circle. When Mr. Fletcher questions the lack of interrogation regarding Sir Philips' identity, Governor Winthrop assumes that the "gentleman scarcely needed other than he carried in his language and deportment" (162). Sir Philip declares himself a Puritan, and no one suspects otherwise. It is when he is asked to take an oath on his crucifix during Magawisca's trial that his religious identity is exposed. For Rosa, who is Italian, disguise is about gender, national origin, and religion. Rosa becomes a dependent who allows her "master" to define her, as she calls it a "slave—or servant—or page—or—whatever he is pleased" (176). Yet, since Rosa is an unfortunate lover and a dependent of the villainous Sir Philip, her transgression is taken as a result of her circumstances.

In addition, Magawisca's brother, Oneco, disguises himself as a sailor in order to save his kidnapped wife, Faith, from her biological family. Faith is captured by Hope's family, who attempt to save Faith from what they consider to be real captivity: Faith's indigenous family.

Oneco enters Governor Winthrop's house disguised as a sailor:

His appearance was that of extreme wretchedness, and, as all who saw him thought, indicated a shipwrecked sailor. His face and figure were youthful, and his eye bright, but his skin was of a sickly ashen hue. He had on his head a sailor's woollen cap, drawn down to his eyes in part, as it seemed, to defend a wound he had received on his temple, and about which, and to the rim of his cap that covered it, there adhered clotted blood. His dress was an over-coat of coarse frieze cloth, much torn and weather beaten, and strapped around his waist with a leathern

girdle; his throat was covered with a cotton handkerchief, knotted in sailor fashion, and his legs and feet were bare. (318-139)

Oneco deceives Winthrop, appearing as a shipwrecked Italian sailor. In Oneco's wretched condition, his youthful look and bright eyes are contrasted with his "sickly ashen" skin color. Oneco's disguise is unique from the others who disguise themselves in that he must hide his skin color. He hides his neck with a handkerchief, but his legs and feet expose his skin color of ashen hue. Furthermore, his sailor cap covers part of his face, possibly to hide his unique facial features. Once Oneco responds to inquiries with "an unknown language," the Governor concludes that Oneco has "Italian lineaments" and hopes to communicate with help from Master Cradock (319). The Governor's misidentification of language saves Oneco from exposing himself. While both Sir Philip and Hope use language during their disguise, for Oneco, language becomes a confirmation of his foreignness.

In the above-discussed instances of disguise, the disguiser has an agency. However, when disguise is used to free the Pequots from prison, the vigorous white protagonists force the prisoners to disguise themselves, conveying that the prisoners do not have agency. Hope's freedom becomes an apparatus for molding the indigenous image to forms that are recognizable. To help Magawisca's escape from the prison, Hope masterminds an escape plan and resolves to have her tutor, Master Cradock, exchange places with Magawisca in the prison. According to her subsequently successful plan, Cradock would occupy Magawisca's place in the prison cell while wrapped in Magawisca's blanket, while Magawisca would exit the prison as

Cradock. In this performative exchange, and despite Cradock's remonstrations and Magawisca's confusion, Hope actively initiates the exchange:

[Hope] then threw Magawsica's mantle over [Magawsica's] expanded shoulders, and Cradock's cloak over all; and, finally the wig was surmounted by the old man's steeple-crowned hat. "Now," she said, almost screaming with joy at the transformation so suddenly effected, "now, Magawisca, all depends on yourself: if you will but contrive to screen your face, and shuffle a little in your gait, all will go well."

The hope of liberty— of deliverance from her galling imprisonment—of escape beyond the power and dominion of her enemies, had now taken full possession of Magawisca; and the thought that she should owe her release to Everell and to Hope, who in her imagination was identified with him, filled her with emotions of joy, resembling those a saint may feel, when she sees in vision the ministering angels sent to set her free from her earthly prison: "I will do all thou shalt command me, Hope Leslie; thou art indeed a spirit of light, and love, and beauty." (328-329)

In the above passage, most action words belong to Hope: Cradock "mechanically obey[s]" as Hope takes his belongings and passes it to Magawisca, while Magawisca follows orders as if they were a "command." Both Magawisca and Cradock are passive and submissive. Their disguise guarantees Magawisca's freedom from the "power" and "dominion of her enemies," which exclude Everell and Hope.

Magawsica's appreciation of Hope's grand gesture results in faithful conformity. Magawsica responds, mesmerized: "I will do all thou shalt command me." While Magawsica's freedom in the settler community relies on following white culture, and obtaining it results in the loss of Magawsica's agency.

In one of many instances of helping others, Hope, seeks to free medicine woman Nelema, who is wrongly imprisoned for witchcraft after she effectively treats Mr. Cradock's snake bite. In conveying Nelema's faith to Everell in a letter, Hope is sympathetic to "Poor Nelema!— such a harmless, helpless, lonely being," and coordinates a rescue plan (112). According to the narrator, this was a "bold, dangerous, and unlawful interposition," but "Hope Leslie took counsel only from her own heart, and that told her that the rights of innocence were paramount to all other rights" (124). Although there is no performance of disguise in this successful exit, Nelema's identity is obscured during her release from prison. Specifically, after Hope opens the prison doors and releases Nelema, there are speculations as to how Nelema "vanished" with her prison door being still locked, and how "the witch was spirited away" (116). In both Nelema and Magawsica's case, there is no agency, and their freedom masks their true identity.

"Might Have Forgotten That Nature Had Put Barriers Between Us"

The introduction of the novel's Penguin edition emphasizes the shared humanity of the Indians and white settlers as "the prerequisite to preventing racial strife" (XXI). This, however, does not prevent "racial strife," but rather, I argue, deepens racial friction. The ending of the novel leaves no doubt that the Pequots

disappear into extinction, as the Pequot's "untold" story is "lost in the deep, voiceless obscurity of those unknown regions" (Sedgwick 359). The Pequot's inevitable fate constructs a national rhetoric that liberates the dogmatic approaches of the Puritans and suggests predetermined futurity. As Maddox claims, Sedgwick depicts American women as resolute and nonconformist, while concurrently, "the Indians, the companions of white women in the struggle against white patriarchal oppression, seem doomed to disappear into 'deep voiceless obscurity'"(110). While Maddox, like Tuthill, contemplates the ending of the novel, she interprets Magawisca's destined exit from the city as a failure to empower Magawisca, relative to the persistent theme of white women's enlightened femininity. Implied in this logic is that indigenous presence would interrupt the privilege of the "wilderness," and although indigenous people "share the same faculties," their "liberty" conflicts with the settlers' (20).

As the narrator states, the sagacious Pequot Magawisca "expressed a consciousness of high birth....[Her] face, although marked by the peculiarities of her race, was beautiful even to an European eye. Her features were regular, her teeth white as pearls...[an] expression of dignity, thoughtfulness, and deep defection" (23). Magawisca is enlightened by the Great Spirit and guided by uncensored thoughts. She is aware that her tribe and the settlers cannot coexist and, at her trial, asks that her words be taken as a proof: "I am your enemy; the sun-beam and the shadow cannot mingle. The white man cometh—the Indian vanisheth. Can we grasp in friendship the hand raised to strike us? Nay" (309). As she demands "death or liberty," Everell shouts "in the name of God, liberty!," creating a "contagious" feeling. In response, everyone except the judges shouts "liberty!—liberty! grant the prisoner liberty!"

(309). Liberty, for Magawisca, is the segregation of her people, and she acknowledges that the white men's presence will lead to her people's disappearance. In the end, despite her friends urging her to stay, Magawisca declares that her people and the settlers cannot coexist.

While chants for "liberty" does not bring Magawisca freedom, they create a sentiment of liberation that resonates with the Americans. Yet, the agency to act on behalf of someone else is available only to whites. If the Pequots must operate under colonial law which does not recognize indigenous sovereignty, to what degree do the indigenous nations have freedom of choice? In an exploration of new land for potential expansion, Hope joins Mr. Fletcher and his company. Hope then writes to Everell about her experience: "[w]e lingered for an hour or two on the mountain...noting the sites for future villages, already marked by them by clusters of Indian huts" (104). When Hope points to the "relics of Indian sacrifices," her company addresses that the relics were used to worship an "unknown God" and that approaching are times when "incense shall rise from Christian hearts," as they take over the villages (105). Even before Magawisca decides to leave her land, the emptied indigenous villages are marked for replacement. These territories already belong to colonists, who prepare to instill Christian beliefs onto the indigenous relics. Although in principle, Magawisca decides to enter the "wild" in order to self-segregate, it is the only grim option she has. The Pequots must either stay under the dominion or vanish into "wilderness" with dignity which offers a tolerant account of Christian past that will continue into the present. The performance of freedom that is granted by the

whites to the Pequots under the guise of Christianity is a convenient resolution to the conflict. In the end, when the Pequots are ready to depart from their land:

“[Mononotto’s] unwavering and undivided purpose...far from impairing [Indians’] confidence, converted into implicit deference, for they, in common with certain oriental nations, believe that an insane person is inspired; that the Divinity takes possession of the temple which the spirit of the man has abandoned. (203)

This passage suggests that Mononotto is committed to exacting revenge, and that his people, who religiously follow him, are sure of his divine purpose now more than ever. Magawisca, likewise, as the constant companion of her father, “soon imbibed [Mononotto’s] melancholy, and became as obedient to the impulse of his spirit, as the most faithful are to the fancied intimations of the Divinity” (203). Magawisca is referred to as the “the priestess of the oracle” and proved herself worthy of the “sacrifice on the altar of the national duty” for Everell and his mother (203).

Magawisca, just like her people, will undoubtedly serve her father Monotto faithfully if Monotto seeks revenge.

Nevertheless, Magawisca is Everell’s muse and Hope’s double. As Magawisca redeems her people through her sacrifice and gains the protection of her friends, she provides to the Pequots a perspective of the massacre:

[Everell] had heard them in the language of the enemies and conquerors of the Pequods; and from Magawisca’s lips they took a new form and hue; she seemed, to him, to embody nature’s best gifts, and her feelings to be the inspiration of heaven. This new version of the story reminded him of the man

and the lion in the fable. With all the eloquence of a heated imagination”
[expressed] “his sympathy and admiration of her heroic and suffering people.
(56, 57)

After listening to Magawisca’s account, Everell registers the settlers as the “enemies” and the “conquerors” of the “heroic” people, contradicting stories he had heard growing up. Magawisca, through her words, is, to him, a gift given by nature. From her lips, details of the massacre resonate differently. In contrast, colonial accounts of the massacre seem deliberately and partially constructed. In response to Magawisca’s vivid account of the tribal massacre, the narrator comments that “the most serious obstacle to the progress of the christian religion” is “the contrariety between its divine principles and the conduct of its professors” (53). Magawisca reveals the inconsistencies inherent to the principles of Christianity, and how Christianity is abused by its preachers. Ultimately, she cautions about wrongfully interpreting religion.

Before being separated during Mononotto’s attack, Everell and Magawisca develop a potentially romantic relationship. Digby suggests that Everell might have “mated with Magawisca,” to which Everell, flattered, responds: “I might have loved her—might have forgotten that nature had put barriers between us” (224). Although the barriers that Everell mentions likely refer to the ensuing cultural conflicts, Digby interprets these barriers as Magawisca being “a tawny Indian after all” (224). Digby further speculates that “things would naturally have taken another course after Miss Hope came” among them (224).

Faith, a white woman who crosses cultural boundaries by marrying a Pequot, is considered culturally lost. She follows the Catholic faith, forgets her native tongue, and adopts the Pequot way of life. When Hope first lays her eyes on her sister at a secret meeting, Hope is uncontrollably preoccupied with her sister Faith's appearance. Hope calls her Mary; Faith's name before the two were separated:

She thought that if [Mary's] dress, which was singularly and gaudily decorated, had a less savage aspect, she might look more natural to her; and she signed her to remove the mantle she wore, made of birds' feathers, woven together with threads of the wild nettle. Mary threw it aside, and disclosed her person, light and agile as a fawn's, clothed with skins, neatly fitted to her waist and arms, and ambitiously embellished with bead work. The removal of the mantle, instead of the effect designed, only served to make more striking the aboriginal peculiarities; and Hope, shuddering and heart-sick, made one more effort to disguise them by taking off her silk cloak and wrapping it close around her sister. Mary seemed instantly to comprehend the language of the action, she shook her head, gently disengaged herself from the cloak, and resumed her mantle. (259)

Hope attempts to revert her sister's appearance to what Hope perceives as natural, and wishes to cover Mary's indigenous clothes by offering Mary a silk cloak. What Hope sees as savage attire is made of materials taken from nature. Born to an Anglo-Saxon family, Mary is a self-identified Pequot and associates herself with her husband Oneco's tribe. Hope despises her sister's attire, yet constantly admires Magawisca's

elegance and grace, which points to the limitations of cross-culturalism. It is socially acceptable for Magawisca to dress as she does because Magawisca belongs to that culture, whereas for Mary, doing so is an unsanctioned cultural trespass. Hope is disgusted by her sister's transformation: "her heart died within her; a sickening feeling came over her, an unthought of revolting of nature" (237). Hope's obsession over her sister's garments demonstrates her fear of possible racial, cultural, and religious assimilation. Mary, Oneco's "white bird" is trapped in a language, costume, and culture that Hope does not understand.

Similar to the admirable pride of the disappearing Pequots, Faith Leslie's "spiritless, woe-begone—soulless body" influences the Pequots' destiny by repelling Hope "with sullen indifference," despite Hope's efforts to win Faith over (359). Efforts to treat the indigenous population fairly and to restore friendly relations strip indigenous agency, and sees the cultural interaction possible only so long as it is granted by the white people as a just treatment. Thus, the Pequots are the ones being helped, directed, and saved; they cannot trespass completely upon white culture with their real identities, freely embraced body and soul, and are always recognized only as passing. Alienated from the beginning with her natural distinctiveness, the sophisticated and wise Magawisca, and her people, without any control over their destiny, are no more than a romanticized relic of settler imagination; it is this nostalgia of indigeneity that becomes tucked into the cradle of history.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation focuses on rarely explored but widely prevalent representations of non-Christian religions in fictional captivity narratives that illustrate America as a new nation of “independence.” Within a post-revolutionary era historical context, these illustrations give rise to the racialization of religion that shapes an American national identity that is entrenched in Christianity. This identification surfaces in a discourse that is preoccupied with liberty and national unity during captivity and authenticates itself from a perspective of religious and cultural differences. What follows in each text is an enactment of moral freedom and overthrow of despotism succeeded by the resistance to and rebellion against the unquestioned authority and submissive subjects. The performance of power in the literary pieces I examine, while exclusively classifying national and religious affiliations, highlights the practicality of conversion and casts the assimilation of non-Christian cultures to be inconceivable. These fictional narratives commonly depict both a crippling anxiety over the possibility of religious conversion and the failure of interracial and interreligious marriages. These tropes function to preserve another fiction, that of “pure” national and religious origins. Hence, as freedom is a determinant principle of nationhood and is performed or achieved in these narratives by resisting religious conversion and embracing Christianity, Christian religion is pivotal in establishing citizenship, immigration, and belonging. The disdain for the converted Jews and Islamic traditions, and alienation of indigenous culture present an American formation that denies access to these groups.

The question of non-Christianity discussed in this dissertation inevitably outlines the question of what it means to be an American. As I have argued, religious and cultural associations of Muslims, Jews, and indigenous populations differentiate them culturally and nationally distinctive, therefore restricting their immigration and naturalization. This limitation, fiction thematically offers, is in direct contrast with the foundations of an emerging national identity of a politically secular and multi-voiced body of settler colonies. In this parameter, racialization relies on the positioning of a national status that rests on the agency of freedom during captivity which in relation designates the enslavement to the religious dogma. In doing so, religious affiliations become the markers of moral compass that either frames one as self-governing or dependent.

Furthermore, as readings also reveal Christianity to be a vibrant, important, and problematic political and cultural production, part of my dissertation shows the consequences of, and how these individual narratives grapple with the rhetoric of national belonging. The extent to which concepts of liberty are construed as liberation is reliant upon the notion of white Christianity. The usage of the heathen, internationally in North Africa and domestically with the Pequots, consolidates American unity as Christian. The close readings in this dissertation disprove early American secularity, as fear of conversion discussed in the primary texts demonstrates that Christianity was essential to national identity.

In fictional captivity narratives, religious otherness is constructed through language that oscillates between a free and enslaved dichotomy, which dictates their positions in hierarchical order during performances of dominance. While interreligious

polemics of earlier centuries center on theological debates, beginning in the eighteenth-century religious affiliations become more critical to establishing boundaries of the American nation. The fictional narratives examined in this dissertation demonstrate this shift, highlighting how the lack of immigration and assimilation thematically rehearses miscegenation and resistance to conversion. In the context of citizenship, restricting immigration and assimilation contradicts the principles this nation was founded on. Particularly, the discussions of how and which populations are easily assimilated reveals an intricate triangulation of religious affiliation, race, and nationhood.

I have looked at a variety of works wherein, despite vast differences in their dealings with the topic, pledge to freedom and liberty occur as common threads. These close readings matter because they are reflective of the growing ideals of liberty during this period, and also demonstrate how these ideals are entangled with the nation's politically unacknowledged but socially inevitable component; that is religious self-categorization. Written by an English immigrant, Susanna Rowson's play displays a heroic break from slavery and reforms the archaic system of governing with exemplary gestures of forgiveness and loyalty to freedom. It demonstrates a paradoxical framework where captives' freedom and captors' enslavement redefine the boundaries of authority and the agency that propels it with a reversed power dynamic. On the other hand, Royall Tyler's work is overly critical, skeptical, and ambiguous towards a preoccupation with national unity. It is a critique of American hypocrisy and disrupts the divide between the savage captor and the noble captive. Although it offers an ambivalent cultural hierarchy, it holds firmly to the idea that

religious identity is fundamental to national belonging. While Rowson's play takes place in Algiers and allows for comparative interactions with Muslims and Jews, Tyler's narrative brings the addition of local color in the U.S. and takes the indigenous people into account in retrospect. Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* gives me a chance to specifically focus on the indigenous representations. Looking at Sedgwick's historical romance as a revisionist history of racial conflict that depicts a seemingly tolerant multicultural and religious society proves the promise of equality in the nation to be a form of racial distancing; it is a Christian tolerance and pursuit of liberty that dispels Pequots from the colonies. Chronologically discussed, these texts impose liberty and freedom of Americans and Christians as an inherent aspect of their national identity during captivity. Despite vastly different presentations of cultural and religious others, fictional captivity narratives reinterpret national tensions as an essential definition of who is captive and who is free, imminently constructing inherent identifications that limit their position in American society.

For future studies, I envision two main additional research paths to expand this discussion. The references of chattel slavery in the U.S. have repeatedly used to invoke the inhumane treatment of captivity. As the inherent liberty of American captive draws an analogy between the political metaphor of slavery and captivity, it is necessary to discuss chattel slavery in an extensive research agenda. And finally, the historical nature of this work will benefit from archival research, such as images and nonfictional rhetorical analysis, and display the similarities and differences that are at play in the fictional texts.

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